THE
NEW YORK LEDGER
DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE, ROMANCE, THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XIII. R. BONNER, { EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR, NO. 44 ANN-STREET. NEW YORK, APRIL 25, 1857. TERMS, { $2 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 7.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

THE WILD KNIGHT;

OR,

THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER.

A TALE OF GERMANY IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER IX.

A DIABOLICAL PLOT.—A STRANGE RECOGNITION.

When Rudolf of Baden left his host he proceeded at once to the chamber where he had slept, and there found the Italian engaged in writing in cypher. This Montani was a wiry-looking fellow; tall and gaunt; with large bones, and plenty of muscle; a head heavy and broad at the base, and well nigh flat on top; a neck like a bull; and a face dark and forbidding. He was a pliant tool of Rudolf's, having come from his native land on a mere marauding expedition, and having fallen in with the Count of Baden at the robbing of a rich monastery, on which occasion four of his companions were slain, leaving him alone. The count saw that he was brave and strong, and at once made an arrangement with him. He was useful as a spy, for he was crafty, witty, and fearless; and he was useful for that other purpose, in the furtherance of which neither mercy nor conscience can be admitted,—a man who could work in the dark as well as in the light, and whose only fear was of being caught by some man better than himself.

Rudolf of Baden gazed around to assure himself that no one else was in the room, and then he took a seat.

"Where is Otto?" he asked.

"Gone to see if the surgeon can't fix some sort of a plaster for his back. He's quite lame."

"He's worse off than I am. A good night's sleep drove away all my head-ache. But I have come on particular business, so put up your pen and listen."

The Italian made a few more scrawly-looking characters, and then, having pushed the parchment from him, he turned towards his master.

"Montani, you know there is to be a tournament to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes."

"To-morrow?—why, so it is. Upon my soul, I had forgotten it."

"So had I. In fact I had thought little of it; but it may be of benefit to us."

The Italian saw, by the count's look and tone, that something of moment was under consideration, and he bent his ear to listen without making any remark.

"First, Marco, you must know that I have the best of reasons to hate this Black Knight, who has so unexpectedly made his appearance among us."

Montani simply gave an affirmative inclination of the head, but said nothing.

"You must be aware of that?" urged Rudolf, as though he wished an answer.

"Of course I am."

"And further than this: he is one who may be dangerous to both of us."

"Ha! How so? Who is he?"

"I only know that he may be a spy," said the count, into whose head such an idea had never before entered, and probably made but a very slight impression now.

"A spy and a rival both?" returned the Italian, with a dark smile.

"And a bully to boot," added Rudolf.

"I understand the premises, sir; and now for the deductions."

The count pondered a few moments, and then arose and went and locked the door which opened into the corridor. As he came back he could not resist the temptation to look under the bed.

"Better be on the safe side," he remarked, as he saw his companion smile.

"Certainly," responded the other, "for I am sure now that you have something of more than ordinary importance on hand; and you had better make haste, for Sir Otto may return ere long."

"Then here's at it," said Rudolf, as he resumed his seat. "You are good at the heavy sword?"

"I own no man my superior until he has proved it," the Italian uttered, with a dash of pride in his tone.

"I know you are good——"

"He that can hold the Wild Count Everhard at bay need not fear a common sword," interrupted Montani, meaning by this that there was no further need of proof on that point; for with the heavy broad-sword he had held a drawn battle with Everhard.

"I know your power well," resumed Rudolf, "and hence I have planned a piece of work for you. You must engage in a bout with this Black Knight. Will you do so?"

"Certainly, if he agrees."

"Of course he will refuse no knight who presents himself."

"But what is to be gained by this? His armor is next to invulnerable."

"Ah—there is the point. I have a faithful armorer in the castle, and sometime during the day we can gain admission to the room where this knight's armor is. I will have the shoulder-pieces upon the left side so fixed that a slight blow of your sword will part them. This done, you have a fair show at his neck, and if you do not give him a finishing stroke there then it must be your own fault. Do you understand it now?"

"Aye—I see it very plainly; and you may rest assured that I shall not fail in touching him there."

"You will do it, then?"

"I will."

"Good. I'll see you again. I must see to the rest now."

With this the count left the apartment, and went down into the court. As he was making his way towards the armorer's shop, he saw a priest and two monks enter the gate, and shortly afterwards he met Everhard.

"What now?" he asked. "Why are these monks here?"

"Do you forget that we have two dead men to bury?" returned Everhard.

"By my faith, I had forgotten it entirely. But when will the services come off?"

"In an hour from now. I am just going to make arrangements."

"By all that's fortunate, this comes just in time!" the plotting count uttered to himself, after his host had gone. "Now, while we attend this service in the chapel, my work shall be done!"

Thus speaking, he kept on to the shop, and called out a man who stood near the outer door. This fellow wore the garb of an armorer, and also wore a most villainous look. He was one of Baden's own men.

"Conrad," the master said, as soon as they were alone, "think you would know the armor of this Black Crusader if you were to see it?"

"Most surely I should, sir," the armorer returned. "There's not another suit like his in the castle."

"Then, hark ye: Do you think if you could gain access to this armor you could fix the shoulder plates so that a sword-blow would remove them?"

"Of course I could."

"And so that the owner should not notice it when he put the pieces on?"

"Yes, sir. I can loosen the rivets on the under side so that the plates may be knocked off easily by a sweeping blow inclining from the neck outward."

"Good. You shall be shown the chamber, and while all hands are at this funeral in the chapel, do you fix all the shoulder pieces upon the left side in that way. You know the necessity of the utmost caution and secresy?"

"Certainly I do, sir."

"It is well. I know I may trust you even with my very life. Did I not feel so, Conrad, be assured I should not trust you with this."

"You know you may trust me with everything, sir," the armorer returned, seeming highly gratified with the compliment.

"So I do, good Conrad. And now see: I am going into the great hall. In five minutes do you come in. Speak not to me there, but follow me wherever I may go."

The fellow promised, and Rudolf went to the hall. In five minutes he saw Conrad enter, and as soon as he knew the latter had seen him he turned towards the stairway, and the armorer followed him. At the door of the chamber where the Crusaders had slept he stopped, and when his man came up, he said:

"This is the chamber. Watch the chapel when the services commence, and as soon as you see the two Crusaders enter, do you hasten hither with your tools and do as I have bid thee. You will find the armor within here. Do you understand it clearly?"

The fellow asked for information on some few points, and then they separated, the armorer going down, and the count ascending to the top of the main tower.

Half an hour after this, Conrad, the armorer, was in the large chamber where the Crusaders had slept. He gazed out at the window, and saw that the knights were all in the chapel; then he turned to the place where the armor was laid. Of course he had no difficulty in selecting that which belonged to the Unknown; and having selected the shoulder pieces, which were attached to the brassarts, he seated himself, and commenced the diabolical preparations for a still more diabolical work. With a light hammer, and a small chisel, he chipped away edges of the rivets on the inner side, so that the plates could be removed by a blow struck in either direction upon them. After this, he rubbed the chipped places over with moistened iron-rust, so that the treachery should not be detected when the owner took up his armor, and then, having placed everything as he had found it, he glided away as he had come.

In another half hour the services in the chapel had been concluded, and the Count of Baden met his armorer.

* * * * * *

"How now, Sir Knight?" cried Everhard, as he heard the former giving orders for having his horse in readiness.

"I must be on my way, good sir," the Unknown replied.

"No, no—not yet. To-morrow is the day for our grand tournament."

"Ha!—Say ye so?"

"It is; and we had calculated upon your presence. There will be many noble knights present. I trust you will not disappoint us."

"By the rood, no. If there is to be a tournament I will surely stop; for though I have no ambition to expose myself upon the friendly field, yet I would see how the power of arms is maintained by my countrymen."

"But you will not refuse a turn, or a tilt, Sir Crusader?"

"Why—no, not if any shall wish to break a lance or hack a sword with me."

"Of course there'll be some who will wish to try the metal of the man of whom they have heard so much. Or, at all events, they will call him to the lists, and then he may give the challenge if he pleases."

"I must stop—— So, my good Robert, you may let the horses be. No—hold. Do you and Robert take them down in the green vale below and let them prance awhile. My Lord of Wurtemberg, whose is this ground below?"

"As far as your eye can reach is mine, sir."

"Then I may send our animals down?"

"Aye—on payment of the usual sum."

"Ah—how much?"

"Why—give a hohlpfenning to the poor old woman in the glen—she who occupies the cot. It is her right, for in the hour when no admission can be gained to the castle, her door is open to the weary, benighted traveller. Sometimes, when the master of this place is away, strangers gain no entrance here."

"It will give me pleasure to help the poor woman, my Lord."

"Mark you—it is only a custom. I give her the green spots of the vale, and she does with them as she pleases."

The fancy struck our hero that he would take a stroll into the deep glen, and having bade Robert hasten with the horses he went out and descended the wild, rocky, stair-like path. It was some distance to the vale, but the scenery was so magnificent that he noticed nothing else. Having reached the foot of the rock he turned to the left, and ere long crossed the mountain stream by the narrow bridge which brought him to the green vale. It was a lovely spot; shut in on all hands by towering heights; with sweet flowers and fragrant shrubs growing upon the elevated sides; grass in abundance waving o'er the level space, while a small streamlet ran murmuring through it to join the torrent near the bridge.

The Crusader directed his attendant to let the horses run, and remain by to watch them, and then made his way towards the cot. It was a simple structure, quite wide on the ground, with walls of stone laid in cement, and the roof thatched with the long, tough reeds or rushes, that grew upon the banks of the stream some distance down. There were several little outhouses, and also a broad pen, within which our hero noticed a large flock of fowls. Having gazed upon the cot and its surroundings for a few moments, he entered the humble dwelling.

At a rough table, upon the further side of the apartment into which the Crusader had made his way, stood an old woman engaged in mixing some wheaten dough. She was three score, at least; tall and straight, with a form still fair in proportion, and with a face which was peculiarly her own—such a face as, once seen, would seldom be forgotten.

"What?—Clotilda?" uttered the Knight, taking a step forward. But as he did so he seemed to recollect himself, for the eager look upon his face was quickly banished, and in a calm, careless tone he added—

"I believe that is your name. I think they said so at the castle."

But the old woman did not reply at once. She started up when she heard her name pronounced, and taking a step forward she gazed intently into the face of her visitor.

"Sir Everhard told me you had charge of the glen here, my good woman. I have taken the liberty of bringing my horses down to nip your sweet grass, and take an airing in the vale. Here—accept this. It will help you to a meal at some time when you may need it."

"What?—a silver mark? You are generous, good sir."

"No, no—I only wish I could do more; but my purse happens, at this particular time, to be very lean."

"Thou art from abroad?" the woman said, gazing more sharply than before into his face.

"I am from Palestine, mother."

"That face! Those eyes?" the hostess whispered, half to herself. "Ha! Do I once more——"

"Hold!" cried the Crusader, catching her by the arm. "You know me not!"

Again the old woman gazed sharply into her visitor's face. At first there was a look of doubt upon her features, but soon it passed away, and with an expression of fixed assurance she said—

"Ah—that face never grew from anything but the ——"

"Be sure, ere you speak," interrupted the Knight.

"And am I not sure? Oh! blessed boy! My noble, generous ——"

With a quick movement the visitor placed his hand over the woman's lips, and as he did so he said—

"I will not try to deceive you further, my good old Clotilda; but let not my name pass thy lips in the presence of any living soul. I am dead to all in Germany—aye—to all on earth. Will you remember this?"

"Most assuredly I will, my boy," the aged dame replied, placing her hands—both of them—upon the Knight's arm, and gazing fondly and eagerly into his face. "Most assuredly I will," she repeated. "But tell me—oh! tell me—whence you come. Tell me all. It is—it is—my own loved boy—my ——"

"Ah—beware, Clotilda; speak not that name. I have thy promise."

"But not to thee?"

"No—not to me, even. I have not heard it for eighteen long years. During those long, long years that name has not once fallen upon my ears."

"But I may know thy story. Thou wilt tell me ——"

"Not now, Clotilda. The tale is not yet to be told. Ah—'twould make thee start were I to tell thee all. Thou would'st feel thy weary heart sink like lead in thy bosom, or beat like the throbbing of earth beneath the power of nature's quaking convulsion! But be sure thou shalt know all in time. Ha, I little thought of finding thee when my host bade me put a hohlpfenning in thy hand for the run of my horses in thy vale here."

"And God knows that you were the last person I should have thought of seeing," the hostess added, with her fond, admiring, searching gaze still fixed upon the young man's face. She seemed to know that she looked upon one whom she had tenderly loved long years agone, and yet she could hardly realize that it was not some strange illusion. But ere long she set all doubts aside, and having wiped away the tears that had been stealing down her cheeks, she said—

"I shall pray to-night with a happier spirit, and have one more loved being on earth for whom to ask God's blessing. And I shall think, too, that thy mother's saintly presence may be hovering o'er the glen."

"Oh, Clotilda, you join my own fancy there. Often, often have I imagined that the spirit of my sainted mother was present with me. Ah—she was a pure being!"

"Earth never bore a purer!" ejaculated the old woman, ardently.

"Aye—I know she was kind to thee. But enough for now. I will seize some favorable hour or so ere I leave this place, and come to thee again. I dare not stop longer now. There may be those in the castle now who could found a suspicion upon my intimacy with thee. Aye, and this reminds me of another caution I must give thee. Be sure that by no word or look of yours any person may suspect that you have recognized me. Can you remember this?"

"Yes."

"Remember—my very life may depend upon your faithfulness in this."

"Fear not, my noble boy. I will even strain the truth ere they gain the knowledge from me."

"I thank thee, mother. And now, until we meet again, farewell."

"God bless thee ever, and make thy life a happy one."

With these words the woman let go of the hand she had taken, and at her door she stood and watched the gallant form until it had disappeared beyond the spur of the rock; and after she could see him no more she turned back into her cot and wiped her streaming eyes. For some moments she stood and gazed into the vacancy before her, and then sinking into a seat she murmured to herself—

"It is—it is he. And yet whence came he? Where has he been? He lives, for I have seen him. It is his own flesh, for I have felt it warm and throbbing, like his generous heart. Oh! how is it? Surely there must be some wondrous story connected with all this. Oh! if my fears should yet prove true! They may—they may! And I can hold them now without the old sorrow, for *he lives!* The noble boy is still alive and well!"

CHAPTER X.

THE TOURNAMENT.

As soon as the funeral of the two dead knights had been properly attended to, Count Everhard sent his men-at-arms and his artizans off to prepare for the sports of the morrow. About a league from the castle, in a continuation of the same vale in which Clotilda's cot stood, and only separated from that part by a piece of wood through which the road ran, was a wide plain where for many years the wild count of Wurtemberg had held his tournaments. And it was just the spot for the sport. The small brook, fed by two or three mountain springs, meandered through the vale, and its waters were as cold as ice itself; so the thirsty could always cool the parched tongue, and the sprained or wounded knight bathe his fevered flesh.

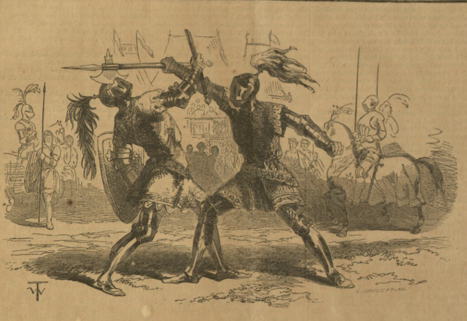
It was to this place that the count's crew made their way, and at once proceeded to put things in order for the morrow. The heavy posts and abutments for the staging and the galleries were already up; and so were the railings of the list.* So all that was to be done, was to repair the gates; clear the enclosures of all rubbish; and then bring out the boards and put up the staging. All was done long before dark, and the men returned to the castle, and turned their attention to cleaning up arms and trappings for both man and beast, for Everhard of Wurtemburg always meant that the visitors to his tournaments should see something of his resources of power in case of need.

During the day the two crusaders were generously entertained by the host, though they saw little of Baden and his friends. In the evening, however, they all met in the great hall, and the wine and song flowed freely. By nine o'clock some twenty knights from different parts of Wurtemburg and Baden had arrived, and the revel was kept up to a late hour. The crusaders drank sparingly of the treacherous beverage; and there was one other present who did the same. Sir Marco Montani had seen enough of the Black Eagle to know that he had a piece of work before him that would require all his nerve and his power of muscle, and he wisely kept his strength to himself. As for the stout host, the winning juice seemed to have little effect upon him. He was used to the wassail, and his head was proof against aches, and his knees, against unsteadiness.

The watchman upon the great tower struck the hour of midnight ere the revel was over, but as the last echoes of the heavy tones were reverberating among the adjacent mountains, the knights all filled to the brim, and the host cried out, in a loud tone,—

"*To the victor of the morrow!*"

All hands repeated the toast; and none spoke more loudly than did Engelbert of Marburg; and as he spoke he bent his eyes fondly upon the



THE DEATH-STROKE OF THE GIGANTIC ROBBER, JOHN VON KEMPTON

---

*The Italian method of tilting at tournaments was to have two lists, so that there should be a barrier between the horsemen, thus permitting them to reach each other only with their lances; but the old German custom was different. They had but one list, and the combatants tilted freely at each other. Hence the many fatal encounters at their tournaments. Some of the bravest knights of the empire were slain thus.

Black Eagle! Aye—and the Italian bent his eyes in the same direction; and upon his dark features there dwelt a look of struggling triumph!

Early on the following morning people began to arrive from all quarters, most of the knights stopping at the castle, while the peasants and artizans and trades-people kept on to the place of the tournament. All was life and activity in the castle, from the lordly host down to the scavenger. Noble knights were selecting their weapons and armor; men-at-arms were training the horses; the artizans were finishing up the wooden lances that were to be shivered in the list; while the butler, cooks, and women were bringing forth the food that was to be freely distributed upon the ground; for Everhard of Wurtemburg never allowed even the emperor himself to outdo him in liberality on such occasions.

At the morning's meal, which was served in the great hall, there were a thousand guests, and the long tables literally groaned beneath the weight of food.

"Now, noble knights and gentlemen," cried Everhard, after the food had been all removed, and the wine had passed, "fill for our last bumper. The fair ladies have selected the queen of our ceremonies, and to her our final cup shall be emptied."

Thus speaking the host took from the hands of a boy attendant a neat packet bound around with blue ribbon, and having opened it he read,—

"Noble knights,—— We have elected as your queen and mistress, the gentle lady, *Agnes of Luxemburg*. To her this day let your devoirs be made; and be assured that she will bestow the reward of bravery without fear or favor."

As the count ceased reading, the name of the fair queen burst simultaneously from every lip, and the thousand goblets were emptied amid the wildest enthusiasm.

"Now to horse! to horse!" shouted Everhard; and as he spoke he leaped down from his place and led the way from the hall.

In the court the horses were all prepared, and as soon as the ladies had been assisted to their saddles the knights mounted and rode forth. In advance rode the heralds and men-at-arms; then came the knights and nobles from abroad, with their esquires; then the Count Everhard and Agnes of Luxemburg; and then Constance of Baden and Blanche of Wurtemburg, accompanied by the Count Rudolf and Sir Otto; while following these came the other ladies with their attendants, followed by another detachment of men-at-arms.

When the cavalcade reached the ground they found the people of the surrounding country, to the number of several thousands, assembled there. The throne of the queen had been sumptuously adorned with crimson velvet and gold, and upon either hand were seats for her fair companions. Below her, upon the right, was the place for the judges and their umpire; while to the left were seats for the nobility.

The sports commenced with a wrestling match, in which the peasants alone were allowed to join. Some twenty brave fellows entered the arena, and during the trial the shouts of the spectators arose on all hands. The prize of victory was awarded to a youth of Weinsberg, named John Lerhadt.

Next came a boxing match, in which the artizans alone could join. At the end of half an hour Hendrick Woldenburg stood alone in the list. He was a young man, not over five-and-twenty; of comely form and feature; and was one of the best artizans in the armory of the Count Everhard. He was the only child of Cotilda, the aged dame of the glen. A dozen swollen heads had been sent from his presence, and he now gave his challenge to any other who might feel disposed to come forth.

"Where is Conrad?" asked the count of Baden. "He is a most expert boxer."

Those who stood around heard the words of Rudolf, and the name was taken up by a hundred tongues. Thus published Conrad the armorer made his appearance. We have seen him once before in the chamber of the Crusaders. He was a stout, burly fellow, with a cast of countenance that nobody liked.

"Ha! is this you, Conrad Blackhardt?" uttered Hendrick, as the former entered the list.

"Aye—you know me, I think," returned Conrad.

"I know thee too well. I wish not to meet thee. Thou hast no business here—so get thee gone!"

"Hold, babbler!" cried the fellow, madly. "Put yourself in position if you would not have your head knocked off!"

"My noble sirs," said Hendrick, turning to where the judges sat, "must I engage this villain? He is not worthy the encounter with an honest man. A fellow who robs aged women, and respects neither helpless virtue nor grey hairs. Send two—three—but let not——"

"Cease thy insolent babbling, knave!" shouted the count of Baden, in a rage. "If ye fear to meet him say so, and let all know the truth."

"Punish him, Hendrick!" cried a voice from the crowd.

"Aye," added another, "Give him his pay for robbing my old mother on the road!"

All eyes were turned in the direction from whence this sound proceeded, but none could tell who had spoken. By this time, however, the rage of Conrad Blackhardt had overcome his reason, and darting forward, he thought to strike the youth to the ground; but his movement had been detected, and in a moment more he lay upon the green sward from a blow upon his forehead. When he arose to his feet he poured out a volley of oaths, and with the bitter curses yet upon his lips he dashed madly at his antagonist. But Hendrick had an easy task. The other was wild and frantic, and with a few cool, well-directed blows, Master Conrad was rendered unfit for further service.

Rudolf of Baden cried "*foul!*" but he found himself alone in the opinion; and the prize was awarded to Hendrick Woldenburg amid the rapturous cheers of the multitude.

"Never mind," muttered Rudolf to himself. "Conrad has done one service that may help to bring down a stouter man than Everhard's armorer!"

And now came some stouter work. Six men-at-arms, of Everhard's castle, entered the list and gave their challenge. They wore common skull caps of iron, shirts of heavy mail, and breast-plates. For some moments no one appeared against them; but at length Robert von Swingenhoffen and Bernard von Schafferhausen entered, and shortly afterwards four more, men of Stuttgart, followed them. The first two will be recognized as the esquires of our two crusaders. The weapons of these combatants were heavy truncheons, each bearing also his shield.

At the given signal the combat commenced, and ere long it was evident that the two squires were doing the heaviest work. The tall, gaunt form of Bernard towered aloft like an avenging spirit among them, while the shorter and more burly form of Robert stuck to its legs with a resoluteness and tenacity that was not to be overcome. At the end of fifteen minutes the two esquires with one of their companions stood victors of the field. Everhard's six men-at-arms lay upon the green sward, and three of the men of Stuttgart by their side. Yet none were killed. The prizes were awarded; the list was cleared; and then followed a death-like stillness. There was now to be a show of still sterner stuff.

There was a movement in the enclosure where the knights were assembled, and in a moment afterwards came the blast of a trumpet. The barrier was thrown down, and a loud shout arose from the spectators as Rudolf of Baden rode proudly into the list. His armor was of burnished steel, inlaid with gold and silver; his helm surmounted by a triple plume; and his horse caparisoned most sumptuously. He wore his vizor up, and as the rays of the sun were flashed back from the polished plates, and his gaze ran proudly over the multitude, another loud shout greeted him. He bore aloft his heavy jousting lance, and then drawing his gauntlet from his hand he cast it upon the ground.

For some moments no one appeared, and a murmur of impatience was beginning to arise, when the barrier was again thrown down, and, at a blast from the herald's trumpet, Engelbert of Marburg rode in and picked up the gauntlet upon the point of his lance, and extended it to the Count.

"Who is he?" was the question upon hundreds of lips. Some, more versed in heraldry than others, read from his shield that he was of Marburg. Then others knew he must be Sir Engelbert who had been to the Holy Land; and soon another shout, loud and long, arose upon the air, for the people held the Knights of the Cross in high esteem.

There was one among the spectators who trembled perceptibly; and that was Constance of Baden. She knew her brother was accounted one of the best tilters in the land, and she would not have her noble lover overcome now for half her estates.

The trumpet sounded again, and as the two knights closed their vizors, Bernard von Schafferhausen and Hendrick Woldenburg entered the list. The latter liked not the young Count of Baden, but he had been detailed by Everhard to this attendance, and he had to serve him.

Engelbert had been provided with a lance like the other's, so he entered the list all prepared.

"Sir Rudolf of Baden," he said, "this bit of friendly sport shall not end in enmity?"

"Not on my part, sir. By the rood, I let not the trifle of a joust ruffle my temper. I trust you are not easily worried by physical discomfiture?"

"Not at all."

"Then you are ready?"

"I am."

At a wave of the Count's hand, Everhard gave the signal. The trumpets sounded, and the two knights withdrew to the ends of the list. At the next blast the horses pricked up their ears and bounded forward. Engelbert possessed only one advantage beside his own prowess and skill: His horse was far more intelligent than that of his antagonist, and required only a word or motion to guide him in the most important movements. The Count carried his lance low at first, nor did he raise the point until within a few paces of his antagonist. Engelbert, on the contrary, carried his point high, and as they met, he brought it down with a curving motion, sweeping the Count's weapon aside, while his own caught his adversary under the gorget; and the latter would have been hurled to the ground had not he brought around his shield just in time to throw the weapon up with a powerful movement—so powerful that his gorget was torn off, and borne away upon the point of Marburg's lance.

Neither weapon was broken, and neither rider unseated, though it plainly appeared that the Crusader had made the best joust. Rudolf blamed his antagonist for having carried his lance unfairly.

"Say not so, noble count," quickly returned the other. "If I carried mine higher than is usual, surely you carried yours as much lower. If you have any fixed rules on that point let me know them."

"It is right," cried Everhard. "You carried all well. But come—to your places."

It was very plain to Engelbert that the Count was mortified and angry. The people had expressed their opinion, and it was not at all flattering to the Lord of Baden. He felt sore at the loss of his gorget; for he knew, and he knew that all others knew, that had it been securely fastened, he must have been borne from his saddle.

"Ho, ho! Rudolf of Baden, it isn't the fat Knight of Flanders ye've got now!"

This was spoken by some one in the crowd, and had allusion to the last knight Rudolf had overcome on that spot.

The count trembled with rage, but he was too wise to say anything to show it.

Engelbert had seen one thing that nerved his arm with new power, and filled his soul with indignation. He had discovered that the count had his gorget and his helm both so fixed that they would be torn off ere, by them, he could be dragged from his seat! This was mean and cowardly; but the Crusader scorned to publish it, though he was resolved to punish it most severely. His plan had been to strike the point of his lance beneath the side fastenings of his antagonist's helm, and thus lift him off: but he resolved upon a different course now. He stooped over and patted his horse kindly upon the neck, and spoke some low words of encouragement.

Again the trumpets sounded, and again the knights started forward. Engelbert dashed on in a straight line until he reached his foe, and then as he lifted the point of his antagonist's lance upon his shield he struck him upon the shoulder such a blow that his own lance was shivered in pieces, while, at the same moment, a sudden wheel of his horse, added to the force of his own blow, sent both the Count and his steed rolling upon the earth. With an easy, graceful motion he rode on to the judges' seat, and drawing off his gauntlet he held up his open hand to show that he had received no hurt.

Shout upon shout filled the air, and when it was seen that Hendrick did not at once raise his master from the ground others rushed forward, and it was found that Rudolf was stunned so as to be utterly insensible. He was soon carried out, and ere long, under the influence of restoratives which were always at hand in such cases, he revived; but he was too lame to enter the list again. His right arm was sprained and powerless.

For some minutes there was a continued shouting, which finally died away. The list was open, but no one entered against the victor knight. A murmur of impatience had already broken the air when the Wild Count Everhard of Wurtemberg himself came bounding over the barrier!

CHAPTER XI.

THE HERO'S TRIUMPH.

Engelbert was at first startled by the appearance of the new-comer, but he was not daunted. He had never attended many tournaments, but he had fought many a harder conflict; and his courage, as well as his prowess, was not to be overcome without stern trial.

"Now, my brave guest," cried Everhard, "there shall be fairness betwixt us, if nothing more."

"Aye—else than that were impossible," returned the gallant Crusader, as he took his gauntlet from the point of the other's lance.

All was now intense excitement, for the Wild Knight was known to be the best lance in Swabia. The charge was sounded, and the combatants set forward. There was a shock—a momentary trembling of both knights in their seats; and as they rode on, both unharmed, they cast down the fragments of their shivered lances.

Fresh weapons were provided, and the knights again took their places. Again they met—again both lances were broken—and again both horsemen rode on unharmed. The wild shouts of the people were long and loud, and hats and caps were thrown into the air in cloud-like profusion.

In the same way were four lances broken. As Engelbert rode to his place for the fifth joust, he felt that Everhard was his superior; and so it proved, though with a most curious sequel, as we shall see.

As the charge was sounded, the two knights came together, and Everhard, by exceeding skill and power, succeeded in bearing his antagonist to the ground, though both lances were broken. The Crusader's horse quickly turned as he found himself riderless, and when he saw his master stretched upon the ground, he bounded upon the Wild Count like a thunderbolt. With eyes flashing fire, nostrils distended, and a wild, defiant snort, he reared aloft, and would have planted his iron feet full upon the breast of the unarmed victor had not the latter slipped quickly from his saddle. Thus foiled, the vengeful steed gave the count's beast a kick that sent him rolling upon the earth, and then started once more for the fleeing knight. At this moment, however, just as a cry of horror went up from the multitude at the prospect of Everhard's death, Engelbert leaped to his feet, and as his quick eye caught the meaning of the scene, he called his horse by name, and with a demonstration of joy as palpable as had been that of wrath, the noble beast bounded to his master's side, and knelt before him.

At this juncture the shouts of the spectators became more wild and jubilant than at any time before; and as Engelbert led his steed from the list, he went with the praises of the honest people showered thickly upon him.

"Noble count," the Crusader said, extending his hand, "I own you the victor. But let me hope that you will not blame my poor horse for his meddling in this matter."

"Blame him!" returned Everhard, warmly,—"by the holy rood, no. See—see how plainly he asks my forgiveness now."

And it was even so. The horse approached the count with his head bowed, and would not lift it until Everhard patted him upon the neck and spoke kindly to him.

As soon as the excitement consequent upon this strange scene was over, Everhard took a fresh horse and rode back into the list, taking his position and casting his gauntlet upon the ground. In a few moments more the Black Knight rode forth and approached the barrier.

"Who comes here?" shouted Sir Otto von Metzinger, stepping quickly forward, and opposing the Unknown's entrance.

"Stand aside, sir," cried our hero.

"Not so. None pass here but those we know to be worthy. Who art thou?"

"One who has written his name high on the tower of fame, and whose prowess has been tried upon thee. Let me pass!"

"What ho, there!" exclaimed the elder judge, just as Everhard himself was riding up: "See ye not his device? Know ye not the Eagle of Swabia? Is not the land full of his fame? Let him pass!"

"Who has dared to intercept thee?" asked Everhard.

"No one of whom it were worth our while to speak," replied the Unknown. And with this the two rode on.

The scene was now one of wild excitement. Everhard of Wurtemberg was well known as the champion of his realm, while the fame of the Black Knight was also known. And then, as they sat in their saddles, they looked like twins in power, though many whispered that he of the Eagle was the better looking knight.

The onset came, and both lances were shivered. Everhard was seen to tremble in his seat, though he rode safely on. The next tilt, however, was not so equal. Everhard's lance was warded off upon his antagonist's shield, while the latter's lance was broken upon the other's body. Though the count was not unhorsed he knew he had the worst of it. The next joust was a fearful one. Each knight knew well the prowess of his adversary, and every nerve was strained for the conflict. At the signal they started; and when the shock had passed Everhard of Wurtemberg and his horse were both rolling upon the earth!

The Wild Count leaped to his feet, and demanded another trial.

"It was bravely done," he cried—"bravely done. But you will not deny me the privilege of trying another lance, for see—my own is broken." He spoke truly: ere he had been unhorsed he had shivered his lance.

"Most gladly, noble sir," replied the Black Knight, kindly and courteously.

The count's horse had been lamed, and a fresh one was brought in; and having mounted this, and taken a new lance, he took his place. The signal was given, and the shock came. Both lances were shivered, as before, and both riders trembled fearfully in their seats. The spectators all—knights, ladies, judges, men-at-arms, esquires, and people—felt the mighty issue at stake. Two lions had met. The fight was between monarchs now. There was a slight applause as this last tilt passed—a sort of breathless wonderment; but all was quickly still again, for they knew that the end was not yet.

As the two knights now sat in their saddles, with fresh lances in their hands, waiting for their horses to gain breath, very nearly the same thoughts were occupying the minds of both. The Knight of the Eagle had never before met with one who gave him so hard a tilt. He saw that all care for self must be put aside, and a decisive blow struck; and for the meeting that was to follow he strained every nerve. The very same resolve was in the bosom of Everhard, and the same thoughts had led to it.

At length the signal sounded. With steady, iron grasps the knights couched their spears and drew the reins. He of the Eagle uttered a low, persuasive word to his horse, and then started. At the same moment Everhard did likewise. Acting under the same impulse—each feeling that the decisive blow must be struck—they started like two arrows shot from opposing parties. Every breath was hushed, for at the lightning-speed of the steeds all saw that a crash not usual was at hand. With an eye used to watching many enemies at the same moment, the Black Knight saw that no mortal shield could ward the stroke of the Wild Count's iron-held lance. Yet he acted as though he would do so. He felt sure if he brought his buckler to his breast, his antagonist's lance would sweep for his head. He did so. With his own weapon he aimed for the gorget—he saw the flash of the bright eyes behind the closed vizor—he felt the rush of the displaced air—he saw the quick lifting of the approaching lance, and then, with a movement he had learned of the wily Moslems, he bent his body like a flash upon his horse's neck, and with a grasp that centered all his power he held his lance in its aim——

There was a shock that seemed to shake the very earth. The Black Knight felt his lance shivered to atoms in his grasp—he felt himself swaying to and fro in his saddle—and he knew that his noble beast staggered like a drunken man. But he raised his head—he shook himself in his seat as though he would be sure he was yet there—and when he turned he beheld Everhard of Wurtemberg at full length upon the ground, while his horse lay by his side with his head thrown backward, and his great brown eye dull as lead. The poor beast's neck was broken!

In an instant the Black Knight cast down the fragment of shattered wood he held in his mailed hand, and leaping from his saddle, he reached the prostrate count just as Hendrick Woldenburg and two others came up. Our hero's lance had passed entirely through his antagonist's metal shield, and a part of the wooden head was broken off between two plates of the brassart of the left arm, bending up the stout iron, but not breaking the skin beneath.

"Air—air!" groaned the count. "By Saint Paul, the very monarch of Pluto's dark host is here!"

"Are you hurt?" eagerly asked the victor, kneeling by his adversary's side.

"No—only earthed, that's all—and bad enough, too, for Everhard of Wurtemberg. But off with this helm!"

The helm was removed, and when the count had been assisted to his feet he could walk very well.

"There is no enmity?" said the Eagle.

"Enmity! Are you crazy? Ha—you don't know rough Everhard yet. But we'll talk of this anon."

The Black Knight was yet fresh and strong, for in the conflicts which had passed there had been no continuous strain upon him. He now threw down his gauntlet in turn, for he could not retire honorably from the list without doing so. There was a signal from Rudolf of Baden, who now sat by the side of the judges, with his arm in a sling, but only Marco Montani was supposed to see it.

In a few moments more the Italian entered the list on foot.

"Noble sir," he said, addressing the victor knight, "will you change the order of the sport? What say you to the broad-sword, and on foot?"

"With all my heart," quickly returned our hero.

"Then accept the sign." And thus speaking Montani handed back the gauntlet which he had picked up.

The Eagle ordered Robert to bring him his broad-sword, and this having been done he gave his horse in charge to his esquire, and then turned to the new-comer. His emotions were not of the most pleasant kind. He knew that the man before him was a sordid wretch. He knew it not only from his own observation, but also what Agnes had told him. And again he saw a gleam in the man's dark eye which he did not like; and there was a compression of the lips, and a curling of anxiety about the sinister brow, which meant more than an honorable desire.

"*The best swordsman in the land!*" our hero heard some one say in the crowd.

"Can he hope to kill me?" the noble knight said to himself. And the thought of Rudolf of Baden—and this man his tool—crossed his mind. The feeling was an unpleasant one—unpleasant to a soul of honor untainted,—but there was no fear—none—for Engelbert of Marburg could have answered that voice from the crowd—"Not now that He of the Eagle has entered it!"

The Italian wore a suit of armor of polished steel, and as he entered he had the right to occupy the position he had first chosen, and thus the sun flashed directly into his antagonist's eyes. But fortune favored the brave in this instance, at least, for just as the blast of the herald's trumpet broke upon the air the sun was obscured by a dense cloud, and a cool, refreshing shade fell upon the tilting ground.

At the word the onset commenced. For a while each seemed trying to ascertain what he had to contend with, and thus neither came to any conclusion, save that each saw that he had an adept before him. Their weapons were very much alike, and if the Italian's was a grain the longer, the other was enough heavier to make up for it. At length there was some striking out. The Black Knight had resolved that he would show nothing of his prowess or skill until he should see his adversary's full intent, for that there was some hidden meaning he knew full well. He soon discovered that Montani was aiming at his left shoulder. When he became assured that such was the fact he took it into his head to flatter the fellow a bit, and let him hit his mark. "For," said he, within his own thoughts, "these plates are of triple steel, tempered to the subtlety of Saladin's cimeter, and riveted faithfully. Let him try his sword's edge thereon."

In a moment more he had an opportunity to allow the thing without seeming to have done it purposely. The Italian's eyes gleamed through the chinks of his vizor as he saw his chance, and with a sweeping blow he struck. Instead of the sharp clink which our hero had expected to hear there followed a dull *clunk*, and then a rattling of displaced parts. Quick as thought he leaped back, and turning his eye over his shoulder he saw the plates cut away from the shoulder-blade up, leaving the bottom of the neck all exposed! Like lightning the varied thoughts flashed through his his mind. Those plates had never before been touched by a foeman's steel. The upper plate hung loosely over the shoulder. He seized it and wrenched it off with his sword hand, at the same time catching a blow upon his buckler and turning it harmless away. He gave one glance at the inner side of the plate, and he saw that a chisel had been applied to the rivet! At Saint Fulvia he had examined every part of his armor, and not a rivet was started then. This had been done at the castle! Rudolf was his deadly enemy—this villain was a murderous tool—the swords had been proposed at just the proper time; and by one who fancied himself a master. The glances he had detected; and above all, the assiduous aiming at that particular shoulder!

All these points of thought flashed through the Crusader's mind in an instant of time, and casting down the plate he turned away another blow, and then set himself to the work.

"Coward!" he whispered, "you seek my life!"

Oh! blind idiot! The villain mistook that speech, with its tremulousness, for the sign of fear, and he let slip the words,—

"*What I seek I'll have!*" And as he spoke he aimed a mighty blow at the unprotected spot. But a slight motion of the buckler let the sword glide downward, and the impetus of the blow carried it to the ground. On the next instant the Italian's helm lacings were cut away, and the casque rolled off upon the ground.

"Now, villain, I know thee!" the Black Knight said, "and yet this time I spare thee. Dare to raise thy polluted weapon against me again and I'll whip thee from earth! Beware! I know thee well!"

Foaming with rage the Italian sprang for his helm, and put it on, and having drawn down the extra throat-lash, and set the vizor, he leaped forward once more.

"Beware!" uttered the Eagle.

"Look to yourself!" the mad wretch howled, aiming a furious blow once more at the bared neck.

Ere many moments our hero caught his adversary's weapon beneath his shield, and then, with the whole force of his giant arm, he brought his own ponderous, subtle blade down upon the top of Montani's helm, close by the side of the crest. Through the polished iron the keen edge made its way; and when its force was spent, the helm was divided in twain almost to the brows! The villain uttered not a sound as he sank down, nor did he move after his body had fallen. In a few moments more some of the retainers of Baden came upon the spot, and when they had removed the cleft helmet they uttered a wail of astonishment, for the skull was severed in twain to the base!

"My lords and gentlemen—and you, noble ladies—listen to me: I have slain a villain of the darkest dye. A villain who had coolly plotted to take my life. Be the result upon my own head."

Thus speaking the knight drew off his gauntlet and threw it down, and then folding his arms upon his breast, he gazed proudly about him. There was nothing haughty or unbecoming—only a show of honorable dignity.

Rudolf of Baden was seen to leave his seat, and hurry away to where stood a party of knights behind the enclosure for the horses. He was pale and agitated as he moved from his seat, and those who stood nearest to him were sure they heard the most fearful curses and imprecations fall from his lips. At length he returned, and shortly afterwards a giant form, clad in plate armor, strode into the list and picked up the gauntlet. His face was broad and dark; his forehead low and contracted, and his eyes small and deep-set beneath his shaggy brows. Such was Sir John von Kempton, one of the most unscrupulous of the robber knights, as well as one of the most noted. He was in the prime of life—some forty years of age—and accounted the strongest man in Swabia. He towered aloft nearly a full head above the Unknown, and was stout in proportion. Upon the saddle he was somewhat unwieldy, but on foot he had been thought invincible. In his hand he bore a huge battle-axe, which he twirled about as a boy would a stick.

"Noble sir," he said, in a deep, bear-like growl, "since I accept your challenge I may choose the weapons?"

"It is your right, sir," mildly returned our hero.

"Then suppose we change the sport further, and give these good people a show of the axe?"

"As you will, sir.——Ho, Robert—my axe!"

During all this time Agnes of Luxemburg had sat pale and trembling, and when she saw her chosen lover accept this fearful weapon with the gigantic robber, she could no longer withhold the expressions of her fear.

"No! no!" she gasped, turning to her guardian. "Oh! he need not do that! It is a plot to kill him!"

"Peace, girl," returned Everhard, who had resumed his seat. "I'faith, the fellow came well nigh killing me. Aye—and see poor Montani—he is killed outright."

"Oh! but that was different. He could not help it."

"Peace, I say! I look to see the giant show our hero some hard work, but nothing more."

Rudolf of Baden had heard the words of the queen, and a malignant scowl passed over his face; but when he looked upon his rival and saw the towering opponent by his side, a look of fiendish exultation took its place, and with nervous anxiety he watched for the commencement of the conflict.

"It is a dangerous weapon we are to play with," said the Black Knight, lightly.

"In some hands 'tis," was von Kempton's reply. "But are you ready?"

"I am."

Not before had such looks of eager interest dwelt upon the faces of the multitude. All present had heard much of the huge robber, and most of them had seen him before. All who knew him knew him for a villain, and as such both hated and feared him. The gallant Crusader had won upon their regard, and they already loved him; and they were now fearful that his time of defeat had come. And more still: They not only knew the terrible nature of the weapon now about to be used, but they had seen several brave knights fall beneath its strokes, within the jousting list, never to rise again.

But all fearful surmises were soon cut short by the final charge of the herald. The two knights swung their axes over their heads and came to the onset. Our hero knew the temper of his weapon, and he had no fear of its failing him, though with regard to the power of his arm he was not so sure. At the third stroke von Kempton's axe passed clear through his opponent's buckler, cleaving it like soft wood!

The Eagle was startled. He knew too well the power of that arm which could thus cleave the firm steel of his buckler. He had seen Rudolf's movement, and he knew that a foul trap was being sprung for him. He had seen enough to know that the huge knight meant to kill him!

Another blow, and the Crusader's shield was torn from his arm. Did von Kempton wait for him to pick it up? No! But like a wild boar, he saw his vantage and sprang forward to seize it.

"Will you not let me regain my buckler?" asked the Black Knight, at the same time dodging a fearful blow.

"No! 'Twas my aim to take it from you. The vantage is mine!"

"Then," cried the hero, in a voice which all heard, "be the result upon your own head. You refuse me a boon which shows plainly that you would have my life. Now look to your own, for I will not spare you!"

Thus speaking, the Crusader seized his axe in both hands, and with strange and almost blinding movements, that set his antagonist at fault, he warded every blow. At length he heard an oath from the giant's lips—it was an oath of death! With one wide sweep he knocked von Kempton's weapon down—then up came the glittering axe in a graceful curve, but quick as lightning—high up—sweeping in its circle still—and on the instant turning in its downward course. The giant saw the gleam above him, and he moved; but 'twas too late. With a spasmodic effort he lifted his own ponderous weapon, but it sank quickly down again. The trenchant blade of the Knight of the Cross came crashing down upon his head like a thunderbolt—through the plumed crest—through the tempered steel—through the skin, the bone, the brain—driven with all the energy of an outraged, insulted, and self-preserving spirit—it cleft the skull in twain, and the bold robber, Sir John von Kempton, was no more of earth!

CHAPTER XII.

A WARNING.

As soon as the Black Knight had withdrawn his axe from the cleft helm of the giant, he started back, and casting his gauntlet once more upon the ground, he cried:

"Have ye another hound to set upon me? If so, let him come! But if not, then let any honorable man who chooses enter here with me."

Proudly erect the Unknown stood, with his mailed arms folded upon his swelling breast, while the shouts of applause went up from the assembled multitude, like the voice of thunder. The moments passed on, and yet no one came. The judges gazed upon the dial before them, and when the sun had passed a certain point, they arose. The herald received the signal, and a long, loud blast followed. The Black Knight's horse was led in to him, and having mounted, he rode out and approached the stand of the judges, where he again leaped from his saddle.

"Sir Knight of the Eagle," spoke the eldest of the judges, "thou hast borne thyself most nobly, and to thee belongs the victory. Justice gives it—we award it. Approach the queen, and receive the reward of thy gallantry."

We of the present day can hardly realize the thrilling emotions of joy and triumph which moved the victorious knight in the hour of his conquest. And when he knelt at the throne of the fair maiden who had been chosen as queen of the ceremonies, and received the simple memento of the occasion, not all the horrors of Tartarian torture could have induced him to relinquish the prize. So felt our hero as he knelt at the feet of Agnes von Luxemburg; and when he arose, with the crimson sash thrown over his shoulder, the rich glow upon his face gave a new charm to his manly beauty. The scarf, or sash, was of silk, elaborately wrought with thread of gold, and bore, beside the profuse ornament, the device of a cross sustained by a dove and a sword. The device was curious in more senses than one. It gave the general idea of the time concerning the sustaining of Christianity, and added thereto a simple thought of the gentle ones who wrought it. And more still: The device was surely fitting only for a knight of the Cross. Everhard was heard to say that "Love had pointed out to the ladies the victor in advance."

But be that as it may, they were all well pleased with the result, even to the fair Constance of Baden, for though she loved Engelbert well, yet she had not even hoped that he could overcome his companion in arms, nor would she have wished to see them come in contact.

"Noble sir," spoke Agnes of Luxemburg, as she threw the sash over the victor's dark armor, "it becomes my duty to award to you the prize of victory in our day's sport. Will you remember, when you look upon this slight memento, that he is bravest who is brave for the good of the worthy; while bravery to the hard of heart is but evil added to evil? May the helpless orphan, the struggling widow, and the oppressed everywhere find a friend in him whom I thus adorn."

The hero could not have spoken if he would. He met the beaming gaze of Agnes's bright eyes, and with a low bow he turned away.

As soon as the enthusiasm of the spectators had subsided, the heralds proclaimed the list opened. There were a few more jousts, in which several knights took part, and then the arena was thrown open to the spectators for an hour. There were wrestling and boxing matches, in which many youths proved themselves stout and brave; and then the whole wound up with pitching the heavy quoit, in which over a hundred of the stoutest men took part.

With a loud laugh Everhard proposed that the knights should go in and try their hand at the new game. There were innumerable little sticks driven into the ground to mark the distance to which different men had thrown the quoit.

Everhard made the first trial. This quoit was a stone, with the corners so chipped out that it could not roll, and weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. The count made the throw, and only one stake was planted beyond where his mark was made. A gleesome shout followed this effort, and then Engelbert took the stone. He cast it from him with all his power, and it struck only a few inches short of Everhard's throw. Another shout, and then another trial, which fell far short of the last.

"Come, my noble son of mystery," cried the Wild Count, turning to our hero; "you must show your skill here. By my faith I look to see you outdo us all."

"And thus outdo myself, eh?" replied the Crusader, laughing. "But I'll try. Whose mark is that beyond yours, my lord?"

"That? Why—'tis the gentle fillip of that bag of bones yonder," Everhard answered, pointing to the gentle Bernard von Schafferhausen.

As soon as the Knight of the Eagle had recovered from the laughter which this quaint answer brought upon him, he picked up the quoit and took his place. He had removed the heavy brassart from his right arm, thus giving full play to the elbow and shoulder. He carefully measured the distance of Bernard's stake with his eye, and having calculated upon the necessary elevation, he drew back and gave one or two preparatory swings. Those who saw the great ridges of muscle in his arm knew that the throw must be a good one. And so it was. Away went the heavy quoit, at an elevation higher than any before, and with a dull *chunk* it struck the ground nearly two feet beyond Bernard's tantalizing stick!

"By the holy rood, Sir Unknown," cried Everhard, in the excitement of the moment, "wilt thou run a race with my Arabian steed? 'Fore God, but I should look to see him beaten!"

"We'll put that off till I gain a greater length of limb, and you can announce my pedigree," our hero returned with a genial, good-natured smile. "But tell me truly, my noble host," he added, seizing Everhard by the hand, "you will not allow any jealousy to grow out of all this?"

"Once more, sir," uttered the count, with a friendly severity in his tone, "I tell you, you don't know the master of Wurtemberg. Let me hear no more of that."

He returned the grasp of his victor as he spoke, and then, turning to the vast assemblage, he cried, in a loud voice:

"Come now, every one of you, to the castle—young and old, male and female. 'Twill be late for dinner if we loiter by the way. Now up with the ladies, my lords and noble knights, and let us be off. The undertakers and surgeon's men must bring along the dead."

It was a common thing in those days for dead men to be found upon the ground at the end of a tournament, and little thought was paid to the affair beyond the usual thoughts of death. But in the present case none mourned for those who were gone—— None, said I? There was one who may have mourned as his rough, villainous nature would let him mourn; and that was Judah von Kempton. He was a brother of the slain giant—a Capuchin monk—five years younger than his brother—like him, reckless and unprincipled, and though not so stout as the other, yet stouter than ordinary men. A vast collection of fat, however, had rendered him unfit for much active service, though he could make hard work for the man who chanced to fall within his grasp. Judah von Kempton had been a sort of decoy for his elder brother, going in advance to convents and monasteries, and thus giving the robbers easy entrance at night. This man scowled fiercely upon the Black Knight, as the latter rode proudly by him, and one who noticed his dark face would have been startled by its intense ugliness.

There was one man who saw that look—who had, in fact, been watching the face of the monk for some time—and he seemed highly satisfied with the result. This latter personage was no less than the *noble* Count Rudolf of Baden. At that moment the count and the monk were brooding over passions so near akin, that they might have exchanged hearts without serious jarring in the train of their thoughts!

But the cavalcade passed on, and the populace fell into its wake, and thus, with merry song and jest, they reached the castle. A hundred servants had been hard at work, and a sumptuous repast was prepared. Four large oxen, a score of sheep, half a ton of venison, with rabbits, fowls, and other small game by the hundreds, were served up in the wide court. Within the great hall the tables were all set, and while the thousand peasants, artizans, and men-at-arms made merry over the generous fare without, the noble lords and gallant knights and ladies sat down within.

And here, again, Rudolf of Baden had more to make him wroth. By the laws of the German tournament, if there was a festival to follow, the queen of the occasion took the victor under her especial charge. So now the Black Knight occupied the seat of honor by the side of Agnes of Luxemburg, while the count sat away down the table, feeding himself with his left hand, his right being yet in a sling.

It was fully dark when the ladies left the table, and after this the wine flowed freely. The first toast was to the queen of the day; the next to the victor; the next to the host; and the next to Sir Engelbert's gallant horse. This latter was proposed by Everhard himself, and was drunk with loud and uproarous laughter. At a late hour the company broke up. In fact, it had been being broken for some time. The first link taken out of the wassail chain was Sir Otto von Metzinger, who rolled from his chair beneath the table, drunk. After him went many in the same way, and Rudolf of Baden seemed ready to follow suit, when two of his attendants carried him off.

As the confusion of the adjournment was at its height, the Knight of the Eagle felt some one pull quickly at his elbow, and, on turning, he beheld one of the boys whom he had seen about the place.

"Come with me, sir," the youthful messenger whispered.

"But for what?"

"Ask nothing here. Follow me."

"Who sent you? Tell me that."

"One sent me who cares for you. Come—quickly."

There was a spark of intelligence in the boy's face, and the knight feared not to trust him; so he bade the youngster lead on.

Out into the rear hall the lad took his way—then through into the corridor that led to the servants' department—thence to the stairs that conducted to the north-eastern chamber. Our hero had never been here before. A narrow corridor opened at the head of these stairs, leading in two directions. The boy turned to the right, and when he stopped it was before a door which seemed to open through the very outer wall of the building, but which, when thrown back, revealed a small, circular chamber within one of the towers. The boy simply bowed the knight in, and then, closing the door, retired.

Agnes of Luxemburg was alone in the chamber before the new-comer thus entered. She started up as she beheld her lover, and, casting aside all mock ceremony, she placed her hands within his grasp at once, and allowed her face to tell its full story of affection.

"Have you sent for me, lady?" the Crusader asked, gazing fondly into the fair face before him.

"Yes—— Oh, if I only had some name by which to call thee. You can call me Agnes, but I can call thee nothing save cold, conventional *Sir*."

"Then i' faith, dearest one, thou shalt go a-begging no more. Call me *Love*."

"Ah—that is not fair. Did I not trust thee as I would trust no other man I ever saw, thou should'st not have such passport to my confidence without a name. But I will use that name when it suits me. And now sit thee down here by my side, for I have something of moment to speak about."

The Unknown took a seat by the side of the maiden he truly loved, and as he saw the deep and solemn earnestness of her face, he gave her his whole attention.

"My—Love," she resumed, with a faint smile breaking over her face, but which passed quickly away, "you are in danger."

"Ha! Hast learned anything new?"

"Only what I have this day seen, and this evening heard. But do not treat it lightly, for I know thy life is sought."

"Aye, Agnes—and so do I know it *has* been. Twice to-day 'twas sought."

"You are right—a—Love. I saw the count go to Sir John von Kempton, and I saw him plead earnestly. But that is not all. Your armor was easily broken."

"Aye," said the knight, with a sudden clenching of the hands; "there was foul work there, I know."

"I saw you gaze upon the displaced plate ere you threw it down. What did you see?"

"I saw where the rivet heads upon the inside had been chipped away as though with a chisel, and a slight crust of rust and dirt, which had been put on to hide the glitter of the newly-cut steel, was partly broken off."

"When did you last examine your armor?"

"On the morning of our departure from Saint Fulvia."

"Thoroughly?"

"Aye. Every time that I am to pass where danger can possibly come, when on the road, I examine my armor,—at least at such seasons once a week. On that occasion I examined every rivet, from the spur-plate to the helmet. Not a thing then was wrong. But I have double proof of the villainy in this case. Not only must some foul hand have been laid upon that armor to loosen those well-set plates, but from the moment that villainous Italian took his stand his aim was fixed upon that weak spot. Now, in an ordinary case, a swordsman would not have looked there. He would have aimed higher up, between the helm and the gorget. I saw he was bound to strike that one particular spot, and knowing, or supposing I knew, the impenetrable nature of those plates, I let him strike. Judge of my surprise upon feeling three broad plates give almost wholly away beneath a blow that could not have even dented them. And then mark with what hot haste he essayed to push up the vantage he was so sure he had gained. I marked him well, and I marked him worse."

"And when was your armor left, and where?"

"All the day yesterday it was in my chamber."

"Then listen to what I have heard to-night: Yesterday, while the funeral services were being performed in the chapel, my faithful old friend and helper, Calypso, a sister, and only sister, of old Clotilda of the glen, chanced to pass the door of your chamber, and she heard a low, sharp, clinking sound from within. She knew that all persons who had any right or business in there were at the funeral; so she hid herself close by and watched. Pretty soon she saw Conrad Blackhardt, the chief armorer of the Count of Baden, come out and walk away; and when he was gone she went into the chamber. The clinking sound she had heard led her to look first at the armor. Next she noticed something glisten upon the floor, and on stooping down she found it to be chippings of iron or steel. Supposing he had been sent to fix some piece of armor, she thought nothing more of it until this evening when, as I was telling her and her companions the story of the tournament, and came to the conflict between yourself and Montani, she started with a sudden emotion; and when she could get me away from the rest, she told me this. What think you of it?"

The knight did not answer at first. He bowed his head, and his frame shook perceptibly. At length he looked up, and, while a shade of pain dwelt upon his handsome face, he said,—

"'Tis even as I had feared. Rudolf of Baden has had a leading hand in this!"

"Aye—and he means to have a leading hand in much more. Did you notice a large monk upon the tilting ground?"

"Surely I did. I noticed him from the almost super-devilish ugliness of his face."

"That's Judah von Kempton. He is a brother of the huge man you slew,—a reckless, wicked man, who sells his own brethren into the hands of the robbers, and shares even the spoils of virtue! I marked Rudolf as he gazed upon him, and you may be assured the two will have their heads together ere long."

"Not until morning, at all events," said the knight, with a look of disgust, "for the most noble Lord of Baden is drunk now."

"Yet you see your danger, dearest," uttered Agnes, placing her hand upon his arm, and gazing tenderly into his face. "Oh! you are not safe here, for as sure as you live at this moment, just so sure does the Count mean to take your life. I knew he was hard of heart, and reckless of soul, but I never before dreamed that he could be capable of this. Ah—jealousy and revenge are two powerful emotions in the bosom of the unscrupulous villain!"

"You speak truly," answered our hero, thoughtfully. "But still," he added, "we have nothing to fear. To-morrow morning Engelbert and myself must be on our way to Aix-la-Chapelle. Until then there can be no danger."

"Yet, if you love me, be on your guard. You know not the Count as I know him. He may not be drunk at all!"

"How? Why—I saw him with my own eyes borne off by his servants."

"Aye—and it may have been a ruse. But," added the fair girl, gazing up with a look of tenderest concern, "I shall not sleep if you do not promise to be careful. Oh! I cannot lose you now. There may be some emotion of selfishness with all the rest; but you will pardon it. If you are taken away I must either wed the Count or take the veil."

"And if I remain?" whispered the knight, taking Agnes's hand in his own, and gazing with fond earnestness into her flushed face.

"Oh—I may persuade upon my guardian to reverse his decision. He has the power. There may be many ways. Oh! Live for me!"

"Bright spirit of beauty, I will."

"Then promise me this.—I shall not be easy without: Promise that you will have your two esquires sleep in your room to-night. Let them sleep by turns."

"But—Agnes——"

"Hold. If you love me hesitate not. Oh! if you could feel the terrible fears that haunt me, you would banish sleep from your own eyes. But let the esquires watch. I know there is danger. Rudolf of Baden has a score of willing and villain tools in the castle. You have seen thus far how they move at his bidding. My guardian is a generous enemy, and a noble friend. Were he your most deadly foe, he would not harm you unawares; but not so the other. Promise. By your love for me I bid you."

"'Tis beyond my power to pass such an order idly by," said the Unknown, smiling. "If you bid me—by my love for you, I must do it. So rest you easy."

"And you will do it?"

"I will."

"Oh! bless you, love. But mind that they sleep not in concert."

"I'll answer for that."

"Then I am easy. I feared your pride would prevent you from acceding to my wishes. I shall see you in the morning?"

"I will not leave without."

"And then you will tell me when we shall meet again?"

"Yes;—and 'twill not be long, either. A swift pace to Aix-la-Chapelle and back is all."

There were a few words of blessing—a kiss—a fond adieu—and the Knight turned away. His position was a strange one. More strange than any save himself could have dreamed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ASSASSINS.

The Knight of the Eagle proceeded first to his chamber, where he found Engelbert, who had already become anxious about him. The former sat down and freely told all the conversation he had just held with Agnes.

"She is right," said Engelbert, seriously. "I have noticed all this myself, and I know you are in danger. And let me say one more thing: I know the Count of Baden has some other cause for his enmity than jealousy of Agnes's love, or revenge for the victories you have gained over him since leaving Saint Fulvia. I can see. Of course this is all dark to me, save the bare result which is apparent. But you know the secret. You know what cause Rudolf has to hate or fear you. We have seen that he is reckless and bad—foul and wicked; and we know that he will hesitate at nothing which can minister to his base passions. Stay you here while I go and call our men. We shall be safer with them here."

The Unknown made no reply, and Engelbert left the apartment at once. As soon as he was gone our hero started to his feet and commenced to pace the room. His brow was dark and contracted, his lips tightly compressed, and a paleness was upon his cheeks.

"They are right," he said to himself. "There is more danger than I was willing to believe. Rudolf of Baden knows me—I am sure of that. Or, at least, he holds suspicions so strong that he will be governed by them as though they were proof positive. I—I—might have known this. But yet I did not think my face would betray me. And yet I am safe enough. I am on my guard now."

The Knight's lips continued to move, but he spoke no further aloud. Ere long Engelbert returned, but he came alone.

"Where are Robert and Bernard?" asked the Eagle.

"I cannot find them," returned Engelbert, with a cast of apprehension in his tone. I have searched everywhere for them in vain."

"Did you inquire?"

"As much as I thought would be safe. I found Hendrick Waldenburg, and he said he had not seen them since the company left the table. They were together there, and were perfectly sober."

"This is strange. But never mind, Engelbert. We can do our own watching. Since you have been out I have been thinking; and I am fully persuaded that it will not do for me to be taken off my guard. So we will not both sleep at the same time. Turn you in now, and I will arouse you mid way 'twixt this and morning."

"You mean to start in the morning?"

"Most assuredly I do. I would not have remained to-day but for this tournament."

Without further remark, Engelbert threw down the coverlet, and removing only his boots he lay down, while the other placed his naked sword upon the table upon which burned the large waxen taper, and then sitting down close by, opened an old manuscript volume which he had found upon the sideboard. It was a large book of finest vellum, and contained a number of wild tales of chivalry. The Knight had not opened it before; but ere long he became deeply interested. The first story he read was of a bold, adventurous knight, named "Conrad the Brave." It went on to tell how his lady-love was snatched from him, and how he overcame a whole cavalcade of knights to rescue her.

The next tale was more wild and thrilling still. It was told of a knight who had been charged by his mistress to deliver an important message, the betrayal of which into improper hands would endanger her life. The Knight was taken prisoner by the lady's enemies, and it was discovered that he had an important message from her to be delivered to an outlawed noble—a noble who had been driven from his home because he was too honorable to rise against his king. After passing through many severe trials, and fighting his way to liberty thrice with almost superhuman power, he was finally entrapped by a lot of monks in a convent, where he had sought shelter; and now they meant to have the secret of his message, or take his life.

The hour on which Engelbert was to have been called had come, but the watcher noticed it not. He read on, and finally his hero was placed upon the rack by the monks, and bade to reveal his secret. He refused, and the torture was applied. And so it went on, from question to refusal, and from this to new torture. The scene was vividly portrayed, and the reader was powerfully worked upon. At length, when the utmost severity of the rack had been exerted, and the accursed monks could throw the rollers over no farther, the tortured knight was made to whisper in his agony—"My life is at your disposal, but my honor and my truth are mine and my lady's; and though I die I will not betray them." On the story went, through the most thrilling scenes of exalted heroism on the part of the sufferer, and the most diabolical wickedness and cruelty on the part of the monks. Finally the knight breathed his last, and the foul monks stood around the mangled form of one whose life had been the price of his fidelity.

With a furious gesture the Black Knight brought his hand down upon his knee, and then leaped to his feet as though the monks of the torture stood before him. Just as he had opened his lips to pour out his curse upon the heads of the imaginary wretches his ear caught the sound of a cat-like tread near his door. He dropped his clenched hand to listen. He heard the door tried—he saw the latch move—and then he heard a whisper. The door was locked. Soon the steps were heard receding, and then our hero turned to the sleeper and aroused him. Engelbert was quickly upon his feet, but his companion warned him to make no noise.

"But what have you been doing to the taper?" asked Marburg, in a low whisper.

"Nothing," returned the other.

"But see—it is burned over four hours since I lay down."

"Aye—I see," said the Eagle, looking upon the taper, which had a blue ring at every hour, and a red one at the half-hours. "But I became interested. However, just as I shut the book up I heard a light step at our door. The lock was tried, and then followed a whisper; and soon afterwards they went away."

"Then they'll come back in some other direction, you may be sure."

"You think there are secret entrances, do you?"

"Yes. All these mountain castles have them. I doubt if there is a room in the whole building that cannot be entered at will by one who knows the ways. I think we shall see who they were erelong."

"I hope so. Let's see: What shall we do? Here—in this closet. Let us hide ourselves here and watch."

"But first," suggested Engelbert, "let us fix a trap for them."

"A trap?"

"Yes—to catch their intent by. Cannot we fix the bed so they will think two Crusaders are asleep there?"

"I'faith we will," cried our hero, liking the idea much. We can find something. Ah—here's just the thing. These mats rolled up will make bulk enough beneath the coverlet, and of course they will not be missed."

There were two large shaggy mats of bear-skin—one at the door, and the other beside the bed; and they were at once rolled up and placed within the bed.

"We can fix these to look like two heads, I think," said the Eagle, as he drew the bed-clothes up and smoothed them down.

"We can try," returned the other; and accordingly they set their joint stock of ingenuity to work. With their kerchiefs they drew a tight bandage about the place where the neck should be, and then drew on their night-caps. Locks of the long shaggy hair were drawn out and arranged, and then the sheet was brought up so as to hide the deception.

"There," said Engelbert, "I think that will draw them on finely."

"It is a good deception," returned the other. "By my faith, I should not suspect the truth if I knew not the secret."

And so it was a close resemblance to a pair of sleepers. It had the appearance of two men, with their faces turned towards the wall, buried in profound slumber. The candle was placed in a small locker over the fire-place, and there shut up so that none of the rays could enter the room, and then the two knights grasped their swords and made their way noiselessly to the closet, and partly closed the door.

They had finished their work just in season; for hardly had they gained their stations in the closet ere a slight grating noise was heard close at hand, and in a few moments more a faint streak of light was visible in the wainscotting near the foot of the bed. It was a perpendicular line, and soon grew wider, until at length an aperture was presented large enough for a large man to pass through. Next appeared a human head, which remained within the room several moments in a listening attitude. This was withdrawn, and a low whispering was heard. Then the head appeared again, and a small lantern was introduced. By the light thus admitted the Knight could distinguish the head as that of Conrad Blackhardt. Ere long he crawled noiselessly into the room, and was followed by no less a person than Judah, the Capuchin, whose stout body nearly filled the aperture as it came through.

The closet in which the Crusaders were concealed was on the opposite side of the room, from where the bed was, and towards it the two interlopers carefully moved, keeping their eyes all the while fixed upon the bed. They were armed each with a short, heavy hammer, dirk, and sword, the former of which they now held in their hands. They did not stop until they had nearly backed up against the closet door.

"They sleep soundly," whispered the monk in a tone which the knights heard plainly.

"Aye," returned the armorer. "They are fatigued; but we'll give 'em a longer resting spell than they hoped for when they lay down."

"So we will. By the holy apostles, I'll send that black scoundrel off to hunt up my brother. But you haven't told me yet how this thing is to appear to outsiders."

"What d'ye mean?"

"Why," resumed the monk, "I mean who is going to bear the blame of this? Who's to be suspected?"

"Oh—I thought ye knew. Why—I've got two stout fellows in readiness, and as soon as they're dead we are to carry 'em off down into the woods of the glen. Of course folks 'll think they wandered off there to cool their heads after the wine, and that some of the hundreds of peasants or artizans murdered and robbed 'em. Ye see, if we strike anywhere near fair they'll be done for, and that, too, without spilling any blood. By the great toe of Peter, I could knock a dozen heads to pieces with this!" And thus speaking Conrad gave emphasis to his assertion by a swing of his heavy hammer.

"Well—so could I; but they may wake up. Come—you hit that chap over the back-side, because your arms are longest. Take 'em right under the rim of the cap—that'll just about touch the temple. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Then—together!"

They both moved noiselessly towards the bed. Conrad held his lantern up—the hammers were raised—a word of command was given—and then the blows were struck. An utterance of astonishment dropped from the lips of the monk, and at the same moment they both started back.

"*What is it?*" the armorer gasped, gazing first upon the bed, and then upon the face of his companion.

"*It is a mark for the blow of the murderer!*" coolly responded the Knight of the Eagle, stepping from the closet, and throwing open the door of the locker where the burning taper was concealed.

For a few moments the assassins were utterly confounded, and started back from the living apparition aghast.

"You see we have saved you a good deal of trouble," remarked Engelbert.

As he spoke the stout monk had regained some what of his composure, and had aimed a blow at the head of the Eagle. Engelbert raised his sword, and with one mighty thrust, the keen, broad blade passed through the villain's heart; the armorer at the same moment met the fiery glance of the Black Knight, and dropping his hammer he started back to the corner of the room and sank upon his knees.

"Mercy! mercy!" he gasped in fearful tones.

"Mercy!—you heartless assassin!" uttered our hero, dropping the point of his weapon. "By what right do you ask it?"

"Oh! don't kill me! I have been set on!"

The Crusader had not imagined that the fellow was such a consummate coward. But he refrained from taunting him with it, because he wished to draw from him the whole secret of this evil work. So he said—

"I had meant to run my sword through your body at once; but if I thought you were not at the bottom of this—if I thought you were urged on by one whom you dared not disobey, I might spare you."

"Oh! I dared not disobey, most noble sir!"

"But explain the matter. Who sent you to do this?"

"I dare not tell."

"Very well." And thus speaking, the Black Eagle raised his sword and made a motion towards the fellow.

"Mercy! Mercy!" shrieked the kneeling wretch.

"Then out with the truth. Keep back a word, or hesitate an instant more, and you die on the spot! Now—who sent you here?"

"My master, sir!"

"The Count of Baden, you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought he was drunk."

"He assumed it, sir."

"And then bade you kill me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he also hired this monk, did he?"

"No, sir—he didn't hire him. The monk was ready enough to come."

"But he hunted the monk up?"

"Yes, sir. But you won't expose me! You won't tell my master that I——"

"Fear not on that score," interrupted the Crusader with a contemptuous curl of the lip. "I should rather your master did not know of my knowledge. If such a story would not stick in your throat, you had better tell him that you escaped, and that we threw the body of the monk after you; for you must carry this carcass away from here."

Conrad promised that he would tell the story—though the Eagle bade him remember that *he* asked it not—and then took hold of the monk's ankles and dragged the body towards the aperture. Engelbert helped him tumble it in, and it was heard to roll down a flight of stone steps. In a few moments more, the two crusaders were left alone, the secret pannel having been closed behind the retiring armorer.

"What do you think of it?" said Engelbert.

"I think 'twas most fortunate that Agnes gave me the warning," returned the other, gratefully.

"Aye—and so do I. But now do you lie down and sleep a bit. We have three hours yet."

Our hero needed no second bidding, for he was much fatigued; so he threw himself upon the bed, having first drawn out the two dummies, and was soon burried in a profound slumber. And while his companion slept, Engelbert of Marburg opened the book of manuscript tales, and commenced to read.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 25.

Our only terms.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $6; eight copies, $12; Postmasters and others who get up clubs can afterwards add single copies at $1,50. The party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free*. It will be useless for parties to write us insisting on our taking large clubs at lower rates. An elegant family paper like the Ledger, (containing no advertisements,) cannot be afforded at less than these terms. We do not want any clubs formed in towns where there are news-offices established. Terms, invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year.

No Travelling Agents.—We employ no travelling agents. If any party pretends hereafter to act as such you can put him down as a swindler. The best way to get our paper is at the book and periodical stores; but if you happen not to be within reach of one, then you can send us two dollars, and we will mail it to you.

We will be responsible for all monies sent us in registered letters, and not otherwise. It costs but *five cents* to get a letter registered at any post-office—and this *insures* the party sending money against loss.

Rejected Manuscripts.—We will not return rejected manuscripts.

THE WORLD-CAULDRON.

The political movements of our age, extending to, and deeply felt throughout the nations of the civilized world, trip all the logic of speculative philosophy. What spirit has thus disturbed the torpor of centuries of world-bondage and obedience? For ages, these excited and rebellious peoples have been stirred at intervals, only by the quarrels of their kings, whose cause they espoused with a zeal denoting unbounded loyalty. Now we see them striving to uproot all the traces of the past—demolishing institutions which their own blood and treasure created—trampling in the dust objects of former reverence, and struggling with a wild fervor for new ideas, new institutions, and a new social and political state. Thrones are shaken, rulers flee, and dynasties perish in the midst of this marvellous revolution. And look further—to the semi-barbarous nations of the nineteenth century. Among them all, are visible traces of the same movements that have convulsed Europe. China, India, the lesser continents of the Southern seas, and the darker regions of our own hemisphere are undergoing rapid and mighty changes. The communication with other nations, long refused by them, is at length forced upon them—the tide of civilization and humanity rises over all barriers of custom and caste, and sweeps away all dividing lines. Wars may occur, but they bring the great era of peace nearer with every sword-thrust and cannon-shot. Intelligence kindles the spirit of Liberty in the world's heart, and it is the spirit of Liberty that stirs the world-cauldron, with glorious precursors of a near millennium for man.

WHERE THEY LIE.

The strength and safety of a people lie not alone in multitude. Lie they, then, in the power of revolutions and massacres—or in bayonets lifted to the gleam of the sun? Could bayonets save Poland and Hungary, and Italy? They did not! The strength and safety of a people lie in their *knowledge* of their dignity and rights, and their *union* in defence of them. Ignorant and disunited, the greater the number the greater the danger of a people. They are their own curse. They fall upon and destroy themselves. In their hands bayonets become suicidal. Give a people a true knowledge of themselves, and no power can oppress them. Liberty comes with intelligence, and the unarmed intelligent million are stronger than ignorant armed millions. The strength of the American people lies least in the number of their cannon and bayonets, and most in their school-houses, newspapers, and books. These are indestructible weapons, to which age adds edge and might, and armed with them, we are safer and stronger than with a soil bristling with murderous steel. Armed with these, millions lean together, and strike mightily, but bloodlessly, as one man, through the ballot-box,

"A weapon surer yet,
And mightier than the bayonet;
A weapon, that comes down as still
As snow-flakes fall upon the sod,
And executes a freeman's will,
As lightnings do the will of God!"

APRIL.

This, of all the months of the year, is the most appropriately named. "April" comes from *aperio*—a Latin verb, which signifies to open, or bring forth, and refers most beautifully to the opening of the buds and blossoms, and the bringing forth of the flowers, and the fruit-protecting leaves.

Among our Saxon ancestors, this was called "Easter-month," because it was the "monath," or month, in which their goddess Easter, was customarily honored with festivities. Among our British ancestors, and sometimes even now, in England, April is represented as a maiden clothed in green, and garlanded with myrtle boughs and hawthorn buds, and holding primroses and violets in one hand, and in the other the zodiacal sign of Taurus—the latter arrangement pointing to the fact that the sun enters this constellation during April. Spencer thus quaintly says of April:

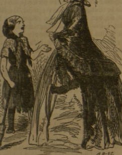
Next came fresh April, full of lustyhed,
And wanton as a kid whose horn new buds.
Upon a bull he rode—the same which led
Europa, floating thro' th' Argolick fluds.
His horns are gilden all with golden studs,
And garnished with garlands, goodly sight,
Of all the fairest flowers and freshest buds
Which the earth brings forth; and wet he seem'd, in sight,
With wars through which he waded for his love's delight.

TOO MUCH LAW.

One of the greatest curses of civilized societies and governments is too much law. Their archives are a lumber of statute books, the enactments of which often confound each other, and the interpretation of which keeps in existence a profession whose whole policy and business is to keep up the complications of law so that it will put common sense at defiance. The latest legislature, whether of a nation or a corporation, thinks itself wiser than all its predecessors, and perforce of its mission, revises all their labors. Often creating new statutes without ascertaining whether or not they annul or conflict with those already existing, they make government, legislation, and law a puzzle, a farce, and too often a downright curse. Democracy should study simplicity and directness in all things, and a republic should have no laws that are not reasonable and clearly intelligible to common sense. How true the saying, "That nation is best governed which is governed least."

THE LITTLE CROSSING SWEEPERS.

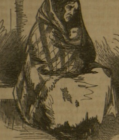
"Please give me a penny, to buy my mother a loaf of bread," is the cry with which the "little crossing sweeper" salutes every passer-by, except those wary ones who dodge past while she is besieging some less fortunate promenader. All these little mud-larks seem to have strong faith that there is a pathos and pence in the combination of "mother and bread," for they all adapt that form of appeal. Especially pathetic are they when such a lady as is represented in our engraving approaches their beat; but great as is their pathos on such occasions, it is not at all to be compared to their pertinacity. In vain does the resplendant lady toss her head and clothe her brows with thunder; in vain does she cry "go away;" in vain does she pretend neither to see nor to hear; the monotonous "Please-give-me-a-penny-to-buy-my-mother-a-loaf-of-bread" is indefinitely repeated as one long-drawn word, while the dirty little bird's-claw hand is kept thrust before her, until her very hoops rattle with rage, and her flounces flutter with indignation. Midway of the crossing she meets another scrawny, outstretched hand, and another voice whines out "Please-give-me-a-penny-to-buy-my-mother-a-loaf-of-bread;" and thus she is escorted, by a voice and a hand on either side, over the crossing, and perhaps far along the street.



Much as one's judgment condemns the encouragement of street-begging, it is impossible to nerve the heart up to the exhibition of harshness towards these poor little nuisances. They are not blameworthy; but they are inevitable, as are all similar breakings-out or ulcerations of an unhealthy system, whether it be a physical, a political or a social one. Let us treat these little locomotive pimples of the social body tenderly then, even if we do not contribute towards the purchase of that much-talked-of and apochryphal "loaf of bread."

THE "STARVING" MOTHER AND CHILD.

Every dweller in the city has seen the "starving mother and child," for they infest almost every street. The child scrawny and ragged; and with the aid of chalk and indigo, furnished with a most promising cadaverousness of complexion, which goes straight to the hearts of the unsophisticated. The mother is an exaggerated copy of the child, got up with great care, and (as bank-note detectors say of counterfeit bills) well calculated to deceive. But it is easy to detect these impostors, if one only takes the pains to note the look of eager, selfish cunning that all their dissimulation cannot keep from peering out of their eyes, and which our artist has so graphically depicted in his sketch.



The mother and child are "starving"—so she says; but if you give her a half-dollar, or any other coin, does she rush to a baker's shop to buy food wherewith to appease her own and her babe's hunger, as would be natural for a "starving" mother? No; she quickly hides the contribution in the recesses of her squalid attire, and heroically sits on, immovable as the Sphinx, and "starves" away till lunch time; when she deliberately pulls out her provender from some mysterious receptacle, and makes a hearty meal, right in the face of noon and the passers-by. This done, "she wipeth her mouth and saith she hath done no wickedness," composes herself and child once more in the proper attitude, and "starves" on till dusk, when she goes home to a hearty supper and hot gin and water; while *modest necessity*, which parades not itself before the public, goes supperless to bed.

HOPE!

One of the poets has associated hope with restlessness of spirit, in the couplet—

"Hope springs immortal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be, blest."

Job has associated it with hypocrisy, by declaring that "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish." Even our own Franklin has put it among his maxims that, "he that lives on hope shall die fasting;" and another poet has gone so far as to exclaim—

"Sweet hope, kind *cheat*!"

And yet we think there is no emotion of the human mind which is more worthy of cultivation than hope. Its tendency, in the individual character, never can be bad, unless abused by being suffered to run to excess. It always gives inward bliss to the possessor, and shows itself by irradiations from his countenance—often producing that beautiful effect which we express when we say "wreathed in smiles."

But hope is beneficent to the society in which its indulger moves. The hopeful man makes everything around him happy. He causes smiles of joy to take the place of the frowns of despair, and renders many a desert spot an oasis!

Commend us to hope—hope in the family circle—hope in the school-house—hope in the counting-room or office—hope in the court-room—hope in the church—hope everywhere and in all?

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

"AND YE SHALL CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT."

I like to throw open the windows of my soul on Sabbath morning—air it of the week's fret, and toil, and care—and beckon in the white-winged dove of Peace to sing me a song of Heaven. I like to go to church;—it is to me like turning from the dusty highway of life into green fields, and, under the friendly shade of some sheltering tree, gazing, through its leafy canopy, into the serene blue depths above. The holy hymn soothes me like a mother's lullaby to her weary child. I care not to read the words of the book which custom places in my hands. I would listen, with closed eyes, while my soul syllables its own secret burden; floating away on that melody to Him who has given us this blessed day of rest; and as the last note dies away, I would cross the sacred threshold, hugging to my heart this holy peace; nor stay to listen to the cold, theoretical, charnel-house sermons to which, Sunday after Sunday—vary the church as I may—I feel myself, unless I do this, a disappointed, disheartened, and wearied listener. No earnestness, no life, no soul; long, dry, windy, wordy skeleton-discourses; tame platitudes, disgusting rant, a school-boy's parrot-lesson, injudicious depreciation of a world which is sweet to live in, and fair to see; injudicious denunciation of innocent, youthful pleasures—proper and healthful for life's young spring-time; an ascetic rendering of that Blessed Book which is, has been, and will be, the soul's life-boat, spite of its listless and blundering clerical expositors—many of whom offer us a Procrustean bed of theology, too short for any healthy creature of God to stretch himself upon. Who can wonder at the rebound? Who can wonder that our young people pass by the church-door, or cross its threshold compulsorily? or that their decorous seniors enter it but to sleep?

A few Sabbaths since I chanced into a church where a hundred and fifty children were assembled for the afternoon service, to be addressed as Sunday-school scholars. The out-door air was a luxury to breathe—it was one of those lovely Spring days, which woo every living thing to bask in the warm sunshine. These children, many of them under four, none over fifteen, perspiring in their out-door clothing, were closely packed in those high-backed, uncomfortable seats,—their cheeks at fever heat, and every pore in their crucified bodies crying out for ventilation and common sense,—neither of which they had for a mortal hour-and-a-half, to speak within bounds. In vain did teachers frown, and nudge, and poke—in vain did the well-meaning but stupidest of possible ministers pound the pulpit cushions, to impress upon their memories, by gesticulation, his long-winded sentences; they were all written—as they deserved to be—in water. Flesh and blood couldn't stand it,—*least of all that most unperverted, critical, and discerning of audiences—childhood!*

That preacher, in my opinion, (and I ached to tell him so,) did more harm in that hour-and-a-half than he can remedy in a life-time. This may seem a bold assertion. *I* think not. One hundred and fifty little children to carry away with them from that church (not only for that afternoon, but for a long life of Sundays,) a disgust of that blessed day, and what *should* be its sweet and holy services. But what is the use of talking? Every great and good cause is sure to be knocked in the head by some blunderbuss. Why didn't that man tell those children some *short*, simple story that the youngest child there could understand, appreciate, and be interested in? Why didn't he open wide the church-doors before their attention and interest flagged? Why so enamored of the sound of his own voice, as to keep those steaming, par-boiled little victims in that sacerdotal vapor-bath, after he had said all he could think of to them, to address their teachers, who, if necessary, should have had a meeting by themselves for that infliction? And why—(I ask all of you who have not forgotten how *your* restless limbs ached when *you* were children)—must *another* minister get up after that, and torture common-sense, and his fainting, frying auditors, by another aimless, inflated, meaningless, and last-drop-in-the-bucket, but (thanks to a kind Providence) *final* address? And why didn't somebody seize the sexton of that church, who had compelled a hundred and fifty children to breathe the foul air which the morning worshippers had bequeathed, and which he was too lazy to let out the windows—why didn't somebody, I say, seize that sexton, and place him in an exhausted receiver, long enough to give him some *faint* notion of what he made those par-boiled children suffer in that "protracted meeting?"

Fanny Fern.

DOUBT AND HOPE.

Doubt is a shadow that avers
Our heavenly abode,
And Hopes are jocund travellers
Upon an unknown road.

Doubt in the heart delights to stay
As in a way-side inn,
And Hope to rise at break of day,
His journey to begin.

Alice Cary.

AN ODD PHILOSOPHER.

A Jerseyman, of Newark, is the author of an essay against the use of money. He says it is "an engine only of evil"—for several years he has declined to receive or use it, and he is convinced (he says) that it is the duty of all to adopt a course that will supersede the use of it. This philosopher, more iron in his financial notions than even Lycurgus, will, if he chooses to look for them, find many practical followers of his doctrine in this city—many "highly respectable," and fashionable people, who have lived for years without money, or other "visible means," and who will continue to live on the "Universal Brotherhood" principle, just so long as they can find fools to trust them. They have substituted "tick" for cash. Here is a field for our odd philosopher, far more ample than the village of Newark. If he has the *means*, his advent among us would be hailed by a multitude of needy disciples, who would divide eagerly with him, to the representative of his "last red cent." Money a curse! Why it is a perpetual torment to millions who happen to be "short" of it.

Flatterers love Flattery.—Those people who flatter most, do but as they would be done unto: for, as none are so much concerned at being injured by calumnies as they who are readiest to cast them upon their neighbors, so it is certain none are so guilty of flattery to others as those who most ardently desire it themselves.

The Celestial and the Divine.—Whatever that be, which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and, upon that account, must necessarily be eternal.

FLOWERS.

The season of flowers is at hand. Already the buttercup and the dandelion begin to peep from their grassy couches in the meadow, and the hyacinth begins to struggle with the frozen clods of the garden. These are but the forerunners of the roses, and the other heralds of Spring's enthronement upon the ruins of Winter, and signalizers of her undisputed sway. This is the beautiful season of which a poet has sung:

"The voice of Spring—and blushing flowers
Lean trembling from their seats,
Wooing from sunbeams and from showers
A free exchange of sweets!"

The love of flowers always indicates a hopeful spirit, as they themselves emblemize hope. To urge their cultivation is the special purpose we now have in view. Anybody can have flowers, if he has a spot where the sun-light and the breeze can pay their visits. If there is no garden-spot, there may be a window-sill on which to place the potted plant, or sow the seed from which it springs. And so, even where Art has so sadly crowded out Nature, as in our great cities, she cannot always deny the boon of flowers to the poorest of the poor.

When we observe flowers in dwelling places, no matter how humble—no matter how uninviting the locality, or how dilapidated the house—we expect to find cleanliness and general domestic care. If there be children also there, we expect to see them clean, though clothed in patched garments. Flowers and filth are seldom found in company. If vicious habits have a dwelling there, we expect to discover *some* redeeming trait. Utter degradation, no more than utter filth, claims the sweet companionship of flowers.

Then, cultivate flowers, readers of the Ledger, one and all! Wherever, amid your hundred-thousand homes, its broad leaf is unfolded, let the leaflets of the jessamine and the rose also be found!

SOCIAL FALSEHOODS.

The respectable portion of the community are supposed to hold liars, as they do thieves, in contempt. In the "good book," we are told that liars shall have their portion in an exceedingly hot place. Doubtless this is widely, literally believed, as most of our respectable, and many of our fashionable people, are members of the various Christian churches, or endorsers of the Scriptures, that hold this truth. Nevertheless, there is more lying, and that too, without extreme provocation, within the circle of respectable, fashionable society, than among all the "lower orders," so-called, of the community. Lying is stereotyped on the Fifth Avenue and its fashionable adjacencies. It is daily, if not hourly, practiced and circulated in the "best families," and we doubt if ever the fag-end of society nursed a sin with half the partiality or universality. There isn't a day that Mrs. Velvet, in her grand house, doesn't tell Bridget, the door-maid, to say, when some poor relation, or beggar, or dun comes to the bell—"please to call some other time; Mrs. Velvet is out," when, instead of being out, the fibbing mistress is standing at the crack of the parlor door. If she owes a bill to some poor mechanic, or needy tradesman, and is "short," or bent on a swindle,—or if she happens to be "out of rig" to astonish Mrs. Quiz, she doesn't scruple to lie, and to teach her whole household to lie, by saying she is out. Shameful as the fact is, it is a fact, that falsehood and hypocrisy are stereotyped in respectable, fashionable society. Let Mrs. Velvel and Mrs. High-flyer beware—since we are told that "liars shall have part in the lake that burneth, &c.,"—lest there be a rod in pickle for them "the other side of Jordan."

MRS. SOUTHWORTH'S NEW BOOK.

Mrs. Southworth's new work—(Vivia; *or, The Secret of Power*)—has just been issued from the press of T. B. Peterson, and is meeting with that marked success and appreciation which it, in common with this very popular authoress's other works, so eminently deserves. Vivia exhibits those sterling and fascinating characteristics that have won for Mrs. Southworth such a wide-spread and enviable reputation, and which will always *command* attention while love and sorrow, and sympathy and suffering, find a place in the human heart. The secret of her power and of her success mainly lies in the fact that she is a veritable, vital, vehement human being, with a great, generous, loving heart, and an ardent, noble soul, superadded to which is the rare *gift of expression*. She feels deeply, intensely, and nobly; and what she feels she can express clearly; and embellish with the rich and varied resources of an affluent imagination. Hence, she at once seizes the heart of the reader with an enduring grasp, and incessantly excites the imagination with an ever-varying, kaleidoscopic panorama, wrought in vivid colors upon a dark background of mystic forebodings, which, when once seen, must be pursued until the mystery is solved.

Vivia is issued in a handsome 12mo. volume, and is for sale by all booksellers throughout the United States and the Canadas.

THE REASON WHY.

The frequent reason of insanity among scientific and literary men (of the more studious and thoughtful class) has caused anxious inquiry as to the reason therefor. In most cases we believe it results from nervous prostration, induced by the over-use of various stimulants. It is too much the habit of literary, and other persons of continuous mental (which is a synonym for sedentary) vocation, to seek by noxious stimulants to excite jaded or flagging mentality. Some resort to wine and alcoholic drinks, some to opium, and some to tobacco. The use of any of these aids, so-called, however buoying they may seem for the moment, is dangerous, if not fatal, in the end. Whatever tension is thus given to nerve and brain, must, in its re-action, reduce the vital power in ratio, so that the system is constantly undergoing an unnatural straining and relaxing, until, finally, it succumbs. If literary men, who use the brain more than the body, would take their stimulus in plentiful physical exercise, the steady use of cold water for bath and beverage, with the indulgence of abundant sleep—opium, brandy, and tobacco would very soon, with much other physic, be cast to the dogs. Our brain-workers would then be always in tune, and, with sound bodies and minds, would do a vastly greater and better work than they can perform under the artificial stimulus system. Nature—human and divine—detests the foreign spurs that accumulate, rather than repair, our mortal weariness and infirmities.

A COMMON VANITY.

There is no passion so universal, however diversified or disguised under different forms and appearances, as the vanity of being known to the rest of mankind, and communicating a man's parts, virtues, or qualifications, to the world: this is so strong upon men of great genius, that they have a restless fondness for satisfying the world in the mistakes they might possibly be under, with relation even to their physiognomy.

CURRENT ITEMS.

It is rumored that the idea is entertained by some of the proprietors of the leading two-cent morning papers of this city, to raise their prices to three cents each. This would do for *one* paper whose managers should have the pluck to employ none but first-class men upon the editorial or reportorial staff, whose respective services would not be worth less than from $30 to $50 a week. Most of the weekly papers of our three great cities have died and are dying of what might be called poor-devil-ism—that is, of starvation wages to contributors, and gratuitous slip-slop to readers; and some of our dailies are going the same road. They must all imitate the Ledger and pay their writers *liberally*, or else dribble down into a state of second-fiddle-ism and hopeless bankruptcy.

It is rumored that twenty thousand French troops are soon to be transported to China, in English ships; also, that France and England wish to enter into an understanding with the United States Government to the effect that this Republic shall possess itself of the entire Western Continent at such time and in such manner as it may please, while England shall have full play in Asia, and France take the lead and ascendancy in European affairs. A pleasant arrangement, truly, for the three "great powers," but rather startling to the "rest of mankind."

Dr. Stark, a chemist in Scotland, who has experimented with writing inks to such an extent as to produce several hundred different kinds, has come to the conclusion that the best and most permanent writing ink is that composed of the best blue gall nuts, with copperas and gum-arabic; and the proportions found on experiment to yield the most persistent black, were six parts of the best blue galls to four parts of copperas.

An English paper states that the Empress Eugenie is investing largely and secretly in the British funds, and argues therefrom that she believes in the probability of some day being compelled to flee from la belle France. The French throne is undoubtedly one of the most unstable seats in Europe; but, still, we doubt this story of Eugenie's British investments.

A woman was found in the front yard of premises near Madison Square, a few evenings since, by a policeman, whose face was horribly gashed while her garments were covered with blood. On inquiry, it was ascertained that her husband, named Gilbertson, had been cruelly beating her, and left her senseless in the yard. The brutal ruffian had not been arrested at last accounts.

A little boy, four and a-half years old, the son of a Mrs. Beldinger, of Brooklyn, a few days since, fell down a flight of only five steps, from the back porch into the yard, and was taken up dead, his neck having been dislocated by the fall. Such a death from so *apparently* slight a cause, should warn parents that they cannot be too vigilant in guarding their children from danger and accidents.

It is reported that the prospect of the crops of winter wheat in Illinois are more unfavorable this season than they have been for twenty years; and that the majority of the farmers will resow their fields with spring wheat, as there is hardly a wheat-field that now promises to be worth the cutting. It is to be hoped that these reports are exaggerated.

The Court of China is in a sad dilemma for want of funds. The Emperor has been compelled to imitate Lycurgus, and issue iron coin; but the "children of the sun" refuse to stand such nonsense, and threaten to throw the base coin at the imperial head. Pekin was in great commotion at the last accounts, and open rebellion was imminent.

According to one "last account" from Nicaragua, General Walker has fought a great battle and gained a great victory; but another "last account" brought by the same steamer, says that he has fought no battle, gained no victory, and is preparing to "cut and run" from Nicaragua as soon as he can get away from the natives.

The dust of New York, it is said, costs the inhabitants several thousand dollars a-year, in the way of extra clothing, as they have to keep up such a constant brushing of their garments, they wear out much sooner than they otherwise would.

A medical man, in the south of France, has recently been condemned to pay a fine of ten francs for refusing to give assistance to two poor persons who had been severely wounded. The ground of this person's refusal was a want of means of payment on the part of the injured persons.

During the past year 330 convictions have taken place in the police courts of London for *aggravated* assaults on *women and children!* Verily the people of that metropolis are becoming uncommonly brutal.

Over a million volumes of new books have been issued from the press of this country during the past year; and yet it is said that not one new work in a hundred is successful.

A damsel in this city having two lovers, and not being able to decide which to prefer, recently settled the matter by marrying one, and the next day eloping with the other.

Rats are getting so scarce in Paris, and rat-skins are so high in consequence, that *kid* gloves have gone up to five francs a pair.

An important decision has recently been made by a Western Court, namely: that arrests by telegraphic despatches are *illegal*.

It seems by the late financial statement of the Ottoman Porte, that the sum expended last year by the Sultan upon the Court and Harem was $7,500,000.

Seven cases of shooting and stabbing were recorded as one night's work, a few mornings since, by one of our daily newspapers.

The weather this season has been most obstinate and unexpected. But a short time since, we heard of snow two feet deep in the western part of this State.

WIT AND HUMOR.

In London, recently, a young woman on the verge of Hymen, received a communication from her future lord and master, informing her—*not* that he had bought the wedding-ring, or taken a house, or furnished it, or provided trinkets for the happy occasion—these would have been only ordinary attentions, and our swain was resolved to be more than ordinary in the nature of his preparations for the coming event and for its contingencies. Perhaps he had insured his life? No, he hadn't. He had been more considerate still. He had enrolled his future wife in a burial club!

Peace or War.—"Why have you volunteered?" said a rather careworn-looking newly enrolled volunteer to a fine young country soldier, who had just arrived at General Taylor's camp on the Rio Grande, at the commencement of the war with Mexico. "Why, I have volunteered because I have no wife, and go in for war," was the unequivocal reply; "and now why have you volunteered?" added he. "Ah," said the careworn countenanced little man—for he was little—with a significant sigh, "I have volunteered because I have a wife, and go in for peace?"

A custom-house officer in this city who is noted for never attending to his duties, was expostulated with on the last quarter-day for not being more attentive to the business appertaining to his office. "I beg to inform you, sir," he replied to his chief, "that I am in attendance here punctually, the best part of the time." "How so?" exclaimed the astonished chief. "Why, sir," coolly replied the "sub," as he pocketed his quarter's salary, "I am always here on pay-day, and I take it *that* is the *best* part of the time."

"Gentlemen of the Jury," said a Western lawyer, "would you set a rat-trap to catch a bear? Would you make fools of yourselves by endeavoring to spear a buffalo with a knitting-needle? Or would you attempt to empty out the Mississippi with a gourd? No, gentlemen, I know you would not; then how can you be guilty of the absurdity of finding my client guilty of *manslaughter* for taking the life of a woman?"

Respectability.—An account of the suicide of an unhappy woman, unknown, has appeared in the papers. The penny-a-liner profoundly observed:—"She had been in a *respectable* condition of life, the appearance of her hands showing she had not been subjected to *hard work*." Thus, hear it, ye laboring honest folk—"hard work" is not "respestable."

A prisoner, when called upon by a magistrate for his defence, said, "I *ordered a lawyer* for to-morrow, and I hope your worship will be so good as to put it off till he comes." "Why, what can the lawyer say about it?" asked his worship. "*That's what I want to know*, please your worship," replied the prisoner.

A vacant see was to be supplied, and the synod observed to the Emperor (Peter the Great,) that they had none but ignorant men to present to his majesty. "Well, then," replied the Czar, "you have only to pitch upon the most honest man; he will be worth two learned ones."

"Mother! mother! here's Zeke fretting the baby.—Make him cry again, Zeke; then mother will give him some sugar, and I'll take it away from him; then he'll squall—and mother will give him more, and you can take that, and then we'll both have some."

THE SPRING.

BY ALICE CARY.

I'm saddest, always, in the Spring
When first we leave the fire, and stay
By the west window, till the Night
Shuts up the tender eyes of Day.

The grass that buds its early green
So close along the sheltering wall,
The piping birds, and little leaves
Have melancholy meanings, all.

And when the roses first come out,
My foolish tears I scarce repress—
It seems to me that Nature's heart
Is bleeding through her gala dress.

The very rain is friendly now,
But when it soaks the earth in showers,
And drags the daisies up, they look
Like corpses of the last year's flowers.

Ah, could I make you know what light
Has melted back into the sky,
Through the green eyelids of the Spring,
You, too, would be as sad as I.

THE WIFE'S CONQUEST.

A TALE OF MYSTERY AND RETRIBUTION.

BY WILLIAM HENRY ERSKINE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY.

Along the winding shores of the neighborhood of Hurl-Gate the scenery is diversified by numerous lovely and romantic inlets, half embraced by richly-wooded promontories, or locked in by green islets. The landscape, composed of mingled isle, woodland and water, is replete with beauty, and presents to the eye of the passing voyager a mingled marine and land-scape of unusual loveliness.

On nearly every green head-land stands embowered in trees some picturesque villa, within ear-shot of the murmur of the waves as they unrol their azure and green scrolls upon the white sand beach, or break in a myriad of pearls against the mossy rocks.

But taste and wealth alone do not occupy this charming nook of Long Island Sound. Here and there, at intervals between the lordly estates of opulence, is visible the humbler cabin of the fisherman.

One of these lowly homes of poverty and toil occupied a small rocky island but half a mile distant from a handsome sea-side villa that crowned a romantic and densely wooded promontory on the main land. The colums and cupola of this seat of taste and opulence were visible through the foliage from the island-rock; while from the door of its marble portico the obscure hut of the fisherman, sheltered only by a dwarf oak, was full in sight. The proud villa and lowly cabin formed the two central objects in the scene. By a pier built out a little way into the water, in front of the villa, were anchored a graceful yacht and one or two row-boats, gaily painted; and in a cove, near the fishing hut on the small island opposite, was moored a fishing-smack, old and weather-worn, and having two masts; and a very small boat, capable of holding only two persons, was fastened to a rock near by a rope. Upon the sandy shore of this little island cove were spread nets a-drying, and upon rocks lay many fish in preparation for curing. The cabin of the fisherman was situated but a few yards distant, upon a slight elevation overhanging the cove.

The evening of our story, the fisherman who inhabited this little island left this cabin, with a pair of oars upon his shoulder, and descended to the beach of the cove where the smack was at her anchor. He was a man about thirty, tall and muscular, and with a fine resolute face, much sun-browned by exposure to the weather. His lips wore a pleasant expression, and his eyes seemed ready to kindle into a smile of kindness. His dress was a red shirt, blue woollen cap, and duck trowsers, neatly patched, as if there was at home a ready needle and a thrifty hand.

The face to which this thrifty hand appertained was in the door-way of the hut, looking kindly and lovingly after him. It was a handsome and true-hearted face, rosy and good in its expression, and had not seen more than two and twenty summers! Winters it seemed never to have seen, it was so fair and pleasant to look upon, as if life to the owner had been all sunshine and flowers!

"Don't be away longer than to-morrow night, Ambrose!" said the young wife of the fisherman, calling after him endearingly. "I shall certainly expect you with the evening tide."

"I shall not fail, Mary," he answered, stopping and looking back, smiling. "The wind is now fair for the city, and I shall reach there before day. And it won't take me long to get all my affairs over. So keep heart and look for me with the evening tide?"

"God bless you and keep you, Ambrose," she answered, with touching earnestness.

He now pulled for his smack, in the little boat, and leaped on board, fastening the minute yawl astern by its painter. On board was an old man, with white, grisly locks, and a wrinkled face, who assisted in hoisting the anchor and then the sails. In a few moments the vessel leaned before the wind, and went dancing gallantly out of the cove, and was soon lost to the eyes of the young wife of Ambrose, by the shoulder of the island.

"Heaven bring my dear husband safely back," she said, softly and prayerfully, as she re-entered her humble but neat home. This had always been her prayer, though he went but a mile out for a day's fishing in sight of the door; but now that he was to take up his cargo of fish, caught and cured the last month, to the city, which he did every four weeks, she felt more anxious than ever, especially as about this time the equinoctial gales were drawing nigh, already forerun by dark clouds drifting swiftly across the skies for the last twelve hours.

So Mary Falconer, committing her husband, to whom she had been married four years, to the care of Heaven, resumed her spinning at the wheel, and sang to keep her heart light. Love is dependence. True love, in woman, seeks, like the vine an, oak to lean upon. Men cannot believe the love of woman to be as strong as it is. Men can never understand woman! Her life is love, if she be a wife; her happiness her husband's presence! When he must leave her, it is as if the sun had set, and clouds hid even the stars. The love and presence of the husband to the true woman is light and joy! With Gertrude, she leans her head upon her husband's breast and cries,

"My world is here!"

And so it is! And when the husband goes abroad he little feels what a sad, dark heart he has left behind. Ambrose went away cheerfully, for duty called him, and when he had been half an hour on board, and away from the sight of his home, he forgot in the care of his vessel and in the incidents of the present, wife and home, though he loved both with deep affection. But Mary forgot not. She had but a single idea, and that was "Ambrose away!" She began to count the hours, from the very first hour to that of his return, ere he got out of sight of the island.

The departure of Ambrose, the fisherman, was not without interest to other eyes. At the extremity of the head-land opposite, which was crowned with the villa, were three great, spreading oaks, beneath which were placed rustic seats, from whence the Sound, with its island, and passing vessels, and the blue shores of Long Island were visible, presenting a noble panorama. As the smack came out of the cove of the little isle, there were two persons seated beneath the oaks. whose attention was at once drawn to it.

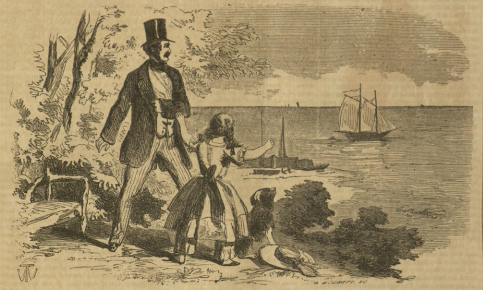
One of them was a man about thirty-four years of age, with a tall figure, dark visage, and a look of gloomy misanthropy. His air and bearing were those of a well-bred person. He was the proprietor of the estate, and a man of wealth, but lived shut out from all society save that of his only daughter, Isabel,—in whose voice, and beauty of face and form, he saw alive again her deceased mother. For this child, now in her sixth year, he lived alone, and she knew no other love than to love her father, who won her heart and bound it to his own by every device of affection, by every indulgence and tenderness of paternal solicitude.

These two figures were visable to Ambrose from his boat, and he civilly raised his woolen cap when he saw them looking towards him, though they were fully a quarter of a mile off.

"I *do* wish, dear papa, I could go with my good Ambrose in his little vessel up to the city," said Isabel, as with bright dancing eyes she watched the wing-like bark fly along the rippling water.

"You would not go without *me*, Belle?" said Mr. Shenstone, sadly, as he always spoke.

"No, my dearly-loved father, I could not be happy without *you!* But why can't you go with me. Ambrose will be glad to have us! He thinks so much of me now, since he took me out of the water when I was so near drowning."



AMBROSE, THE FISHERMAN, OVERBOARD.

An expression of pain passed across the fine, dark face of the father at this recollection of an event that had nearly written him down childless.

"Do not speak of it, my dear child," he said, drawing her towards his bosom; and parting her sunny brown tresses from her beautiful and pure brow, he bent over and kissed her with such emotion that a tear fell upon her forehead, sparkling like a diamond amid her locks. She softly stole up her lovely arms about his neck, and entwined them like tendrils around it and kissed him with feeling and sympathy; for young as she was, this sweet child's heart and soul were full of sensibility and love! To the father, she was a link between earth and heaven to him! His soul tarnished and darkened by the guilt that in thirty years of life darkens more or less all men's souls, drew near to her pure spirit as to a fountain of life and purity. In her innocence and truth she was to him as the fabled bud plucked from Paradise by Adam ere he was driven forth by the angel, and which he sacredly guarded and kept as a memorial and link still between him and his Creator. This dark and gloomy father seemed to feel that the innocence of his child was a shield between himself and his Maker. He loved and cherished her with almost a superstitious awe, as if on the wings of her purity he might one day ascend to God—the father saved by the child! But the key to this feeling will be found only in the past history of this father, which for the present will remain sealed to the curiosity of the reader.

"I love Ambrose so much, since he saved me, dear papa! Now he's gone, may I go over to the island to-morrow with you and see good pretty Mary?"

"Why do you love to venture upon the water so, my Belle? I can never consent to your going again where there is the least danger to which you may be exposed!"

"But when Mary came over with her nice melons and corn to sell, she said she had such pretty little golden goslings,and one of 'em she named for me, and then——"

"You shall have as many goslings as you like, child, and golden-feathered canary birds, and gold fish, and whatever you desire here at home! But I can't consent for you to go away!"

"But I love to see best what I haven't got, dear papa! When a thing belongs to me I don't care about it. I love other people's things best!"

"I will buy them for you, my sweet love!" he answered, with his unchanging melancholy face.

"Then I shall not care for them, pa, because you see they will be mine. I get everything so easy that I don't value it; but when it is somebody else's, I love it a great deal more. I wish you wouldn't get for me, papa, *every* thing I want," she said, naively and with earnestness. "What I don't have is so much prettier!"

Mr. Shenstone sighed! His nervous indulgence to retain *all* his child's affection he perceived was becoming a source of danger to her happiness. Yet he was so jealous of her love, he so feared she would not love him with *all* her heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, so dreaded that she would love some one else too, that his whole thoughts had been ceaselessly occupied in conquering and keeping every avenue to her love. He forbade any one else to present her a gift; and he had even become jealous of her gratitude to Ambrose, for preserving her life when, as he was passing in a boat, she fell into the water, from the pier upon which she was playing with her favorite spaniel, "Arlo." If her nurse or other attendant promised to be too much thought of by the lovely child, whom no one could help loving, she was removed, and a stranger replaced her.

At this moment Arlo, her auburn and black spaniel, came bounding up to her, and asked with speaking eyes a caress. She bent down and muffled her little hand in the Angola-like fleece of his silky hair, and patted his head, and said a few pet words to it.

"You must not love your dog too much, daughter. Affection like yours is too rich and precious to be lavished upon a brute! It seems to me that, if you loved me as I want you to love me, you would have no affection left for anything else."

"My own, dear papa!" said the charming child, with looks of surprise and slightly reproving, "I can love Arlo and you too! You don't know what a big heart I have, if I am a little girl! I could love all the world, the birds, the sky, the—the stars, and the flowers, and—and——"

Here she stopped, as if she could think of nothing more! Yet her eyes were raised to the blue heavens, and she seemed to look as if she felt instinctively that there was something beyond the heavens to love! But after a moment's gaze upward, as if in thought, she shook her head and said emphatically,—

"That is *all!*"

"All what, Belle, my angel?" asked Mr. Shenstone, struck by the expression of her face and words.

"All to love! I was thinking, dear papa, that if there was a good man in heaven,—way above those rosy clouds, and way above the night stars, way above the sun,—that made the stars, and the sun, and the rosy clouds, and made the flowers and birds, and everything that is pretty, I would love Him, too! For, pa, how much more I could love the good Man who makes such a pretty rose as this in my hand, and gives it such a sweet smell, than I love the rose; for to-morrow it will fade and drop all to pieces; but the good Man who made it will live to make more next spring, just as He makes new stars every night, and a *new*, pretty bright moon every month, when the other fades all out and leaves the world dark."

Mr. Shenstone regarded his child of six summers, as she was speaking, with deep interest and amazement. His face grew paler and paler as she spoke, and he rose quickly and paced rapidly to and fro, in front of the seat beneath the trees. An expression of pain, and perhaps of guilt, darkened his countenance. Suddenly he turned to his child, who was toying with Arlo, who jumped up to rob her of the moss rose which she held as far out of his reach as she could, and said something sharply.

"Come, Isabel! We must go in! The dew falls. You must not talk about such things. There is——" here his voice faltered, but he withheld not his words—"there is no one beyond the flowers or stars for you to love but your father! Love me alone, and think nor ask of any one above me! Give to me all your thoughts and affection, the rich fullness of your heart. For you I live, and in your love do I have my being!"

"Pa! see! Ambrose! Oh, he has fallen out of his boat! He is swimming! Save him—save him!" she shrieked, and ran towards the pier.

Mr. Shenstone saw that what his child had said was so. Ambrose was swimming far astern, and his companion was tacking to go back to his aid. He had gone forward to boom out the jib, as the wind was aft, and the oar breaking, which he used for the purpose, he lost his balance and fell into the water.

Mr. Shenstone at a glance saw the danger of the fisherman, for the wind was fresh, and the smack, far to leeward before she could tack, would have to make at least three tacks to reach him. He could see the brave fellow swimming manfully, and once heard his voice as he gave an order to the man in his smack, how better to steer towards him. Isabel on the wings of gratitude towards one who had been her preserver, flew to the pier and sprang into a little boat before her father could reach her.

"What madness!" he cried, as he caught her in his arms and replaced her on the pier. "You can do nothing, child!"

"But *you* can, papa! You can row to him before his large vessel can get back to him! Oh, save dear Ambrose for my sake!"

"For *those* words," muttered Mr. Shenstone to himself, "he shall perish before I save him! The child loves him, and applies to him an endearing epithet. Perish every being and object that rises between my daughter's love and me!"

Isabel stood wringing her hands, and the tears fell from her eyes like drops of rain. Mr. Shenstone stood and calmly watched the struggles of the strong swimmer, but made no movement to go to his rescue. Perhaps he thought he would be rescued by his smack ere he could reach him. Thanks to his strong arms and courage, Ambrose swam until, after being twenty minutes in the water, his boat lay her course close to him, and he was taken on board. On seeing his safety, Isabel cried for joy. The vessel now once more kept on her former course, and the deepening twilight soon hid it from their sight.

As the child returned towards the villa with her father, she thought, with wonder, about his refusal to go to the aid of Ambrose. The more she thought of it, the more she was troubled; and when her father kissed her good-night, as usual, she did not put her arms around his neck as heretofore. She did not know why she omitted it; but she didn't feel like it! She felt as if she wished to get away from his embrace as soon as she could. There was an undefined shadow of fear and suspicion, a mere shadow, on her heart. She could not understand why so good a man as her pa should not have tried to save so good a man as Ambrose. She lay awake thinking, as she had never thought before, and at last, troubled and perplexed, she fell asleep, with a tremulous diamond tear pinning down each eyelid. In her dreams, for sleeping innocence lives in a pleasant dream-world, when this naughty world is shut out, a beautiful angel came to her, and a glory shone around her from a crown of stars that encircled her brow. She also held a star in her hand. This angel was more lovely than any object Isabel had ever seen. She seemed to recollect her smiling face and her voice of music as she bent down over her bed, in the air, and shadowed her with her golden wings.

"My babe, I am thy mother's spirit and thy guardian angel," said the voice to Isabel in her dream. "I have come to teach thee to love God!"

And Isabel in her dream said,—

"Who is God? Art thou God, all so glorious and beautiful?"

"God is the maker of the sky, the stars, the flowers, the birds, the rosy clouds, and also your maker and mine! His home is above the stars, but He is everywhere present. His name is Love!"

"Oh," exclaimed Isabel, in her dream, "this is the good God that my heart has told me was somewhere to be found, and that I felt my heart wanted to love! Do you love Him, mother?"

"Angels breathe His love as their common air. His love is our life, and we should die if we were taken from it. Love is the atmosphere, my babe, that envelopes the throne of God. Love is the air of Heaven."

"I will love God also, mother!"

"Then hereafter you shall receive a crown of brilliant stars like mine! I come now to give thee knowledge of God! Take this star in my hand as the foretaste of what you are hereafter to receive, if you love God."

Here the beauteous angel, her mother, as the child saw in her dream, gently let the star fall from her hand towards her. As Isabel gazed with admiring wonder upon the slowly descending orb, she saw it open and expand into a crown or circlet of light, as if garnished with all manner of precious stones, and hover above her head for an instant, ere it lighted upon her brow, crowning her with celestial glory. The brilliant light awakened her, and she saw the rising sun shining full and dazzlingly upon her eyes. But the dream so impressed her that for some moments she could not realize that the sun's rays did not proceed from the starry crown of the angel who had so sweetly visited her in her dream.

CHAPTER II.

THE FISHERMAN.

Towards the close of the day following that on which the scenes of the preceding chapter were placed, Mary Falconer might have been seen standing upon the highest point of the little island on which she dwelt, earnestly watching the Sound, in the direction of the city. She was expecting Ambrose, her husband, and for two hours she had been upon the hill in the rear of their cabin. Her knitting was in her hand, and she tried to pass the time industriously, as became a thrifty young wife of a poor man; but sometimes she would forget her needles and gaze, and gaze on the water, and wonder why he came not.

"He has had more than time to go to York and back again, and be back two hours ago. I fear something has happened to him! I would not tell him of the dreadful dream I had the night before he left, for fear it would trouble him for my sake: how I saw him as plain as I now see that tree, struggling and swimming for dear life, and no aid near but little Bella Shenstone, who tried to save him, but he wouldn't take hold of her hand, lest he should draw her down. Oh, I remember it so clear! I fear me—I fear me!"

Here Mary Falconer sighed heavily, with eyes full and running over with tears. She soon brushed them away, saying—

"I will trust him with God!"

She then looked again over the wide waters, and saw a small white sail. She watched it between fear and hope for an hour, until as it grew nearer she was sure that it was Ambrose, for often watching for him made her familiar with every feature and outline wherein her husband's vessel differed from others; though to any other gaze but that sharpened and skilled by love, all boats of this class would look exactly alike.

She was right. It was Ambrose's smack returning. The wind was light, and she came on slowly, so that the great red, round sun went down under a horizon of gold and crimson, before the smack was near enough to the island for her to distinguish the persons on board, and then she counted three, and the stranger thus added to the number that left in her the day before, was a lad, a mere child, who sat in the stern by the side of Ambrose.

As the smack rounded the island, Ambrose saw his wife, and waved his cap to her, and even kissed his hand right gallantly; for the young fisherman had not yet lost all the French blood, which he had inherited from his Huguenot ancestors. who a century and a half ago, found shelter and a home for their posterity, from the tyranny of persecuting kings, on the pleasant shores of New Rochelle. His black hair, his fine dark eyes, and symmetrically athletic form, were still more French than American, though America had been the birth-place and home of his fathers for six generations.

So Ambrose gallantly kissed his hand, fisherman as he was, to his pretty wife, and she kissed her's back again to him, with a "God bless you, my husband." She then added, "my dream has not come to pass! Oh, how light my poor heart is, that has all day been so heavy. I will let dreams trouble me never again! *Who* can the boy be in the boat with him?"

The shoulder of the island now hid the vessel from her eyes, and she hastened down to the cove to meet him when he should land.

But Ambrose did not immediately come into the cove, but stood on across the narrow passage that separated his island from the main, and drew near to the pier-head of Mr. Shenstone's residence.

This gentleman was taking his usual evening stroll along the shore, accompanied by Isabel. Twenty times that day, she had it on her lips to tell her sweet dream of the preceding night to her father, and to ask him about her spirit-mother, who was an angel, and about God! But every time she was about to speak she was secretly repelled by something in the expression of his dark face, that made her silent. A sense within seemed to say to her, that the subject would be disagreeable to him. So she locked her secret up in her little heart, till she should find somebody she could tell her dream to, and ask if there was a God to love, as well as flowers, and stars, and birds. She was racing along the beach with Arlo, when the sight of the smack arrested her steps. After looking a moment, she exclaimed, clapping her hands—

"Pa, Ambrose is come back safe, and is going to land at our pier!"

Mr. Shenstone walked on, and as the smack approached, Ambrose hailed him, saying that he had some parcels for him, sent up from the city, and wished to know "at which wharf he should land them?"

"Here, sir!" answered Mr. Shenstone, coldly pointing to the steps of the pier.

The vessel sailed gracefully in and stopped at the stairs.

"I was requested, sir, to bring these down by your merchant, sir!"

"Very well. What is the freight?" asked Mr. Shenstone, taking out his purse.

"Oh, nothing sir? nothing for such a trifle," answered Ambrose, with his frank smile.

"I must pay you, sir! I ask no favors of any man. Here is a dollar!" and he cast the silver into the boat. It was caught by the hump-back old man who acted as foremast-man, who said with a growl of satisfaction, as he put it into his tarry pocket.—

"I never refuse money, though it had the image of Beelzebub stamped on it."

"Oh, pa, see that handsome boy! What bright, black eyes, and a sweet smile he has, and such curls!"

The lad now discovered, and thus described by Isabel, deserved all her praise of his personal beauty. He was about eight or nine years of age, and singularly handsome; but his dress was mean and coarse, yet did not hide his natural comeliness and grace. Mr. Shenstone cast an indifferent glance upon the boy, and turned away, taking Isabel by the hand. But she more than once looked over her shoulder to see him, and their eyes met and interchanged smiles that meant nothing, only kindly and curious; the recognizing smiles of childhood that asks no artificial introduction to know and be known. Children become acquainted by first looks and smiles, and by and by timid words; but never as grown-up persons do, by shaking of hands.

"I thought you was goin' to give the lad to this rich Mr. Shenstone, skipper?" said the gruff old fellow, after trying with his jack-knife, the edge of the dollar, to test the purity of the coin; for he saw too seldom the currency of the Republic to be familiar with it at sight. The old man had been on the salt-water from a boy, and without wife or child, still had no home but the little cuddy of the smack.

"I did think about it, but he seemed so rough and out of humor, I was afraid to speak to him about him, Diggon."

"Wall, one month more don't make a man poorer. We can make use of him in the smack, to pay for his togg and duff."

"I am resolved to keep him, if he will remain with me," answered Ambrose. "We have no child, and he will be as a son to us! But I must not delay here, while Mary is waiting supper for me, and wonders at my stay. She will marvel, too, who I have got as passenger. Push off, and ease that sheet a little! Belay! Now she heads off!"

In ten minutes more the vessel entered the sheltered cove of the little isle, and Mary, a few moments afterwards clasped her husband to her heart with, "Thank God, my dream is gone for nothing!"

"What dream, wife?" he asked smiling as he kissed her on both cheeks. "Dreams go by contraries; I hope it was a right ugly one."

"It was, Ambrose. I dreamed I saw you drowning and that pretty Isabel tried to save you! But I am so happy you are returned safe, after it all!"

"Well, this time your dream, wife, came very near the truth. I did fall overboard yesterday, but being a good swimmer I kept my head above water till I was taken aboard again. You dreamed pretty close! As for Mam'selle Isabel, she no doubt *would* have saved me if she could!"

Mary turned pale at this news, and once more warmly expressed her gratitude for his safety.

"But what lad have you brought home with you, Ambrose?" she asked, now for the first time drawing her attention from her husband.

"I will tell you when we get into the house to the supper table; welcome him as if you knew all about him. Perhaps he may be a son to our childless hearth."

"Is he an orphan?"

"Ask no questions, now, wife; but go and take him by the hand, and smile and bid him welcome."

Mary did as she was told, and taking the strage boy by the hand, said to him:

"Your looks are enough to win any body's kindness. What is your name, my handsome little lad?"

"Vivien, madame!" answered the boy with a French accent and tone.

"Why, he is French, Ambrose?"

"Yes, wife, and therefore do I feel the more kindly to him, since we, you and I, sprang from French in the olden days."

Here Ambrose, who had some knowledge of the language of his fore-fathers, handed down in the family with certain heir-looms and customs, addressed a few words to the lad in French. The boy immediately come to him and took his hand with smiling confidence; for there had been an air of timidity and doubt about him, which made the good wife's heart move with an emotion of pity, mingled with maternal tenderness.

"Poor boy!" she said gently; "he looks like a hunted fawn, among enemies. Cheer up, my little fellow; we will be your friends! But perhaps you can't understand me! I'm dying, dear Ambrose, to know how you came by him. He doesn't look like the ordinary lads on the coast about; but as if he were better born."

"I know nothing about him, save that I picked him up out of the water, and that he has been wickedly treated by those he escaped from. Noble or peasant, it is the same to Ambrose, who will be ready always to help a fellow-being, especially a lone child, in distress. But come, wife, I am hungry; and I hope you have supper enough for three mouths?"

"Plenty, and to spare," answered Mary, laughing, as she preceded him into the cabin, leading in the stranger-boy, who clung to her with a shelter-seeking air, that deeply touched her sensitive heart.

The shades of twilight had deepened into the first star-light as they went into this lowly abode of love, content, and honest thrifthood. The lingering red of the western sky shed a soft, dreamy light into the apartment, as soft and dreamy as it sheds through palace windows into gorgeous halls. God through his works makes no distinction between man and man's dwelling. His sun is reflected in the pewter cup of the laborer, as well as in the gilt goblet of the noble. The breeze that fans the brow of an empress on her throne, fans the brow of the water-carrier by the rustic fountain. The stars that shine down into the queen's upraised eyes, shine down as brightly into the upraised eyes of the fair cotter's daughter. All that nature gives, Ambrose and Mary had, while the luxuries invented and devised by meretricious art, they had never known, nor felt the need of. Nature gives all she possesses to her children; but Art turns the bunch of grapes into red wine.

The little habitation of the fisherman contained but two apartments, a neat bed-room, and a common sitting and eating room. The furniture was plain, and stools took the place of chairs. A table was neatly covered with a coarse, but white cloth, and set for two persons; but Mary hastened to set a third plate for their little guest, from whose fine face she could scarcely keep off her eyes.

"Truly, truly," she said to herself a dozen times as she bustled about, "I ne'er saw so handsome a child! Oh, if I could have been the proud mother of such a child! Come, Ambrose, sit down; come my little (what is his name, Ambrose?) oh, yes, Vivien! Come Vivien, sit down and have a good supper. I know you didn't get much that a boy likes, on the smack, for Diggon, who never eats or sleeps out of the vessel, doesn't keep much on hand but hard beef and hard bread!"

Here she took her seat, and looking at Ambrose, folded her hands reverently. He did the same, and said:

"Giver of all good things, bless these thy gifts, and give us grateful hearts for all thy mercies."

"Amen!" said Mary bending her head.

Vivien looked surprised, but imitated her with a reverence that showed he was not unaccustomed to see men grateful for their daily bread.

"Can't you speak English?" asked Mary with a smile as she handed him a mug of fresh milk.

"A very little, madame," answered he in a pleasant voice. "Je parle bien Francais."

"I wish I could 'been Fransay,' to talk with him, Ambrose," she said, smilingly.

"I don't talk much, but between his English and French I have got his story."

"I am dying to hear it!"

"Well, after supper you shall. Can you find a place for him to sleep?"

"Yes. I can spread a quilt on the dry sea-kelp in the back room, for to-night; and to-morrow I will make up a bed for him, if he is to stay with us."

"He has no other home, Mary," answered Ambrose, gently.

In a little while Vivien, who seemed fatigued and sleepy, was shown his rude, but soft bed, and in a few moments he was fast asleep.

"Now, Ambrose!" said his wife, as she sat by his side in the door, while he lighted his pipe. "Now, about this pretty boy!"

"You shall know all I know, wife," he answered. "There is great wickedness in the world that we never hear of in this, our little island. You must know that after I had got nearly opposite the city last night, about midnight, and sailing along with a light wind, past the vessels at anchor in the East River, I suddenly heard a shriek from a foreign looking ship, that I was not a hundred yards distant from. This was followed by a plunge into the water, a pistol shot from the deck, and quick voices of command in French, to lower a boat. I thought it was a woman's shriek, and thinking some foul deed was going on, I steered strait for an object which I saw on the water, and which the seaward current was rapidly drifting away from the vessel.

"'It is a man overboard,' said Diggon, with more fire than he usually shows. 'Let us give him help, Ambrose, before they get to him from the ship.'

"I was already laying the smack strait for the object, which I could more and more clearly perceive to be a person, not so much swimming as struggling for life, throwing up the hands and disappearing and re-appearing upon the surface, still to struggle. When within twenty feet of it, I saw the head disappear and remain under. The next moment I was over-board, and diving down, brought up the drowning person."

"Was it Vivien?"

"Don't anticipate, wife. Yes, it was Vivien, the same noble-looking child who now sleeps so calmly in there on the floor. I rose to the surface with him, and catching by the gunwale of the boat, lifted his dripping form up, so that Diggon took him in on board. I had only time to say quickly, before I got aboard myself, 'Hide him—conceal him in the cuddy!'

"The boat from the ship was by this time lowered and put off. There was at the same instant, sent up a blue light which cast a brief and strange glare over the waves. If the fugitive had been in the water, he would inevitably have been discovered and taken. I was already on board again and at the helm, which I at once put hard down and run for the nighest dock. Evidently, I had not been seen to plunge overboard, as I had rescued the lad before the blue light was burned. In a few minutes we were far away from the boat, which was rowing round here and there, while voices giving directions were heard from the ship's deck.

"In a little while I ran the smack into the little dock by the Anchor tavern. My first act was to see to the child, who lay upon Diggon's lap, sobbing and starting with slight cries of mortal terror. I soothed him with kind words, and taking off his wet clothes, put on him a suit left on board by that jackanapes lad, Mark Skellton, when he ran away from the vessel. The clothes which I took off from him, you shall see! They were as fine and rich as if they had been on a prince!"

"Wonder! Dear me! Then he must be some rich person's child," exclaimed Mary, who had listened to her husband's narrative with the deepest interest, intermingled with expressions either of sympathy, or of amazement "Poor, dear child! poor mother of it!"

"At length I calmed him, and he told me in French, all he knew about himself."

"I wish he could speak and tell me in good English; but I will soon teach him, Ambrose."

"He said that he lived in a far land over the sea, with a kind dear mother and father, in a great stone house, and that he was happy; but one day, as he was playing in the garden, some men caught him up and carried him off a great ways, he could not tell where, and left him a good while with people he never saw before. That then they took him on board a ship, and he went to a country where every body talked English; and where he stayed so long he learned to speak it some, from a woman and a man that never left him. By and by, he could not tell how long it was, he was taken by this man on board a big ship, and they sailed a great many long days, and long dark nights, till they came to the place where the ship was I saw him jump overboard from!"

"Poor, dear child! He has been in wicked hands!" said Mary, with emotion. "And did he not know it was New York he had come to?"

"He is too young to know much about places; and they did not tell him where he was; only, last night, after they had kept him shut up in a state-room for the two days they had been in port, he says he heard the captain and the wicked man, his keeper, talking about him. The captain said he would not take him any further, that he would have no more to do with the business; and the man then said that he was ordered to leave him on shore in New York, that he might perish, or never be heard of again.

"'You had better kill the boy, and done with it,' said the French captain.

"'I think so, too,' answered the man, 'for if he ever turns up again, all that has been done for the three years past, will have been of no use. It will be safer to put an end to him.'

"Upon over-hearing this conversation from his room, where he was kept prisoner, the poor boy," continued Ambrose, "was overcome with fear; and when, a little while afterwards, the man whom he calls 'the bad man,' opened his door, believing he came to kill him, he made a desperate spring at his breast, uttering a wild, fierce cry. The man was so taken by surprise, that Vivien passed him, mounted on the wings of terror, to the deck, and with a thrilling shriek, finding himself pursued, leaped from the taffrail into the sea! You know the rest, dear wife! Under God, I have been the instrument of saving his life; and whoever seeks to possess him, must pass across the body of Ambrose Falconer. We will keep him very quietly, and not let him be seen much, until all inquiring after him shall end; and doubtless much will not be made; for not seeing me rescue him, they will believe that, a child so helpless in the water as he, must directly have perished. And as to destroy him in some way, seems to have been the purpose of the cruel persons who had him in their hands, they will rejoice to suppose their end so easily brought about."

"This is a strange story, Ambrose!"

"Yes. I can find a key to the treatment of this noble-looking child, only in supposing that he was in some manner in the way of property that others desired to get possession of; and not wishing directly to imbue their hands in innocent blood, have sent him off under the charge of a hired ruffian, to England, perhaps, first, and then from more precautionary motives, to this country. But as I do not well understand my French, and he speaks but imperfect English, I could not comprehend all he told me; but I have the core of it. Providence has defeated the murderous intention of these wicked persons, and thrown the persecuted child upon our care."

"And sacredly will we do for him what God expects of us, dear husband! Instead of losing you by water, I have you safe again, and a child presented to my love and care out of the sea. What is his other name?"

"He has forgotten. He remembers only Vivien."

"He shall be Vivien Falconer," said his wife, with animation. "How he moans in his sleep! Poor boy. He dreams that he is still in the hands of wicked men."

Thus speaking, the good woman went to his bedside, and stooping down kissed him, and soothed him with her hand and gentle voice, so that he fell again into quiet sleep with a beautiful smile upon his lips.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

* * *

LIGHT COME, LIGHT GO.

Perhaps almost every one has noticed that money or property easily and quickly acquired by speculation, by fraud, by dowry, or by legacy, generally passes away about as readily as it came. And so also is it with intellectual attainments. The latter may not be quite so obvious, but still it is as true, even from the nature of the case. If a person commits to memory any number of passages, poetry or prose, without previously realizing their importance, and treasures them up only for some present transient occasion, the impression is much sooner lost. He has not expended that labor and time, and gathered all those associations which are so necessary, according to the principles of philosophy, to enable him to retain fixed and permanent impressions upon the mind. One may very fluently recite any number of written pages, and nearly all be forgotten in a very short time. Another will recite the same pages less promptly, and yet remember the larger portion for a much greater length of time; and simply because he devoted more attention and laborious study to it.

This is essentially the same reason with that for the sudden loss or expenditure of property. If one has not learned the value of it by personal experience, toil, or sacrifice, he does not appreciate it sufficiently to exert himself to find a permanent investment, neither cares to spend it economically. This affords, perhaps, satisfactory reason for the fact, that the sudden loss or expenditure of wealth so invariably follows the easy and speedy possession of it.

SIGNS AND WARNINGS;

OR,

OUR NEIGHBORS OF THE LOG CABIN.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

When I was a very little girl, my mother and little brother, and myself, made a long visit at the home of my maternal grandfather, which was situated in a certain town and county of one of the middle States, near the borders of one of the great lakes. My grandfather was a farmer, and though his house stood near the road which led from a large, flourishing inland town to the nearest lake-port—a road that was, consequently, much traveled—his neighbors were neither many nor near. It was a very pleasant home; and my brother and myself never thought of loneliness, we found so many things to afford us amusement in garden, and field, and wood. There was a perfect hamlet of barns, and sheds, and carriage and corn-houses; a dairy-house over the bright, clear spring at the bottom of the yard, and a shop with several rooms where the spinning and weaving, and the tool-mending, and, in winter, the shoe-making, were done. It would have been strange if, with the range of all these places we could not have found enough to amuse ourselves with.

But we were not absolutely without companions of our own age. Our nearest neighbors lived in a tiny log-house by the road-side, perhaps one-eighth of a mile from us. This little cabin, with its two rooms and loft, was the habitation of seven souls. There were the father and the mother, two sturdy boys and an elfin looking girl, Mrs. Myram's superannuated mother and an ancient spinster sister, who was always called Aunt *Easter*, though her name was probably Esther. These children were all older than ourselves, but they were not above playing with us, and had never done wondering at our delicate complexions and nicely made clothes, all so different from their own, and marking our city rearing.

I remember little of the father, but the impression he made upon my childish imagination has never been effaced. He was a tall, gaunt, billious-looking man, with large, black, deep-set eyes that seemed to look upon the world and his fellows, from out their cavernous sockets, with a wild, yet sorrowful scorn. A sort of mystery hung about this man, and the whispers that I heard by my grandfather's fireside, stimulated my wonder and curiosity to a pitch that, child as I was, I am now surprised that I should have so well controlled. He was a cooper, and my dear delight was to steal alone into his little shop, and nestled upon a pile of shavings, watch his movements and that strange, melancholy face that fascinated me with an undefinable but powerful charm.

Mr. Myram was a man of education—he had a few well-selected books that wese worn with much use. He was exceedingly uncommunicative, never conversing with his neighbors except upon business, and they repaid his evident avoidance of them by shunning him in return.

Not so his wife, and her mother and sister. They were illiterate—neither of them being able so much as to read. They were quite ready to gossip however, and all that was known of the Myram family came from their lips. They readily spoke of their former home in Rhode Island, indulging still in the peculiar phrases and pronunciation of words that mark the inhabitants of that region. But, even in their garrulity, they were never tempted to solve the mystery that hung about Mr. Myram. Six cups of strong tea, flavored by an amount of scandal that left but few persons in all that region untouched, had once elicited from Aunt Easter an emphatic declaration that she hated Godfrey Myram, but, when questioned as to the grounds of her dislike, she was suddenly silent, and no amount of coaxing could elicit from her another word of allusion to that individual.

The mystery lost none of its strangeness when it died upon Aunt Easter's lips, and it was strengthened, day by day, by Godfrey Myram's taciturnity. But, while people wondered and talked, and started innumerable strange theories to account for such a man being found in the companionship of three illiterate and superstitious women, living apparently in content beneath the roof of his humble cabin, and seeing his children growing up uncultured, the whole family moved on the noiseless tenor of their way as if they had been as commonplace as their neighbors. And meanwhile the children played with us, hunting eggs in the barns, and cowslips by the brook-side, and wild flowers and the beautiful *orchidae* in the woods; while John and Samuel made sleds, and tops, and kites for my brother, and cunning little pails and boxes for me, and Clarissa helped me dress my dolls with a ready needle, an expertness in cutting that I often tried to imitate, and a fantastic taste that showed itself in the selection of the most gorgeous and diversified colors.

Unfortunately Clarissa (at home she was Clarry) was an incorrigible tomboy, and led me many a wild chase into forbidden places, and caused me many a severe reproof for torn garments and muddy shoes. Many a night did I go supperless to bed after some madder prank than usual which I should never have dreamed of but for Clarry; but the worst punishment was to be denied her companionship even for a day. All I bore for her sake only made me love her more, and cling to her more fondly. She was my bosom friend and confidant. Everything I knew or heard was repeated to her, even the not over-complimentary remarks which my mother would sometimes make about her when she led me into wild scrapes. These would be repeated at home and cause quite a commotion among the three women, for Mr. Myram never heeded, and the children did not care. The consequence would be a cold reception at our next visit, and the surly command from Granny Bloom—"Molly take Ned, and go hum."

During the summer and early fall a fearful epidemic ravaged the whole region. Scarcely a house but had its sick or its dying inmates; in many instances whole families were prostrated, and, in large neighborhoods, there were not so many unharmed as sufficed for the care of the sick. I well remember those fearful and gloomy days. Day after day, and week after week, the sun shone undimmed by clouds, hot from the brassy heavens upon the parched earth. Clouds of dust hung in the atmosphere and tinged it luridly. All the streams, and the marshy borders of the creeks and the lake-shore, slowly dried up and sent their poisonous miasmatic exhalations to infect the hot air. Every breath was pestilence and death.

With the single exception of one of the farm hands, all beneath my grandfather's roof escaped. But in the log-cabin of our humble neighbors there were four victims. Mrs. Myram and her two boys were severely ill, but soon recovered; while Mr. Myram, who had been first seized still lingered, in what the tired physician pronounced a state of convalescence, but which was so slow as to leave its progress almost unmarked.

One hot afternoon as we were all gathered in the broad porch, Mrs. Myram came along the road and turned into the yard. She had a heavy basket of apples on her arm, which she was fetching from one of the neighbors' orchards. As she came up she set down her load, and wiping the beads of perspiration from her flushed brow, sank down beside it upon the step of the porch.

"How is Mr. Myram to-day?" said my grandmother, kindly, after offering her poor neighbor a glass of cool water, which she drank gratefully.

"No better and no worse, as I know of," she replied. "I'm afeard he'll die yet, or else it's some of the rest of us, for I've seen signs, and had plenty of warnings these few days past."

"Oh, Mrs. Myram," said my mother, "you should not think of such things. Mr. Myram is feeble, and requires careful nursing. Without it he may relapse, but with it, I am sure, the doctor thinks him quite beyond danger. Don't allow yourself to become excited by such imaginings."

"But I have had warnings, Mrs. R.," persisted Mrs. Myram. "Only last night I saw three lights moving about in the burying-ground, and——"

"Mary, go and see where your brother is," interrupted my mother, who had observed my opening eyes at the first mention of "signs and warnings."

Ah! she little knew the stories of ghosts, and apparitions, and witches, and supernatural warnings that I had listened to from the lips of Granny Bloom and her two daughters, till I had peopled the darkness with a thousand fearful forms, that robbed my pillow of sleep by night, as I lay with straining ears to catch the sounds of the rustling robes, or the solemn voices of unearthly visitants. My excited imagination had long claimed these stories, but I was allowed to hear them only under the strictest promises of secrecy.

When I returned our visitor had gone, and the story of the "warnings" was lost to me.

That night, a little past the midnight hour, there was a heavy knocking at the outer door, and John Myram's voice, in tones of terror, was summoning assistance to his father's bedside. He had been suddenly seized with some peculiar and dangerous symptoms of the disease, which, I remember, went by the name of a "paroxysm," and nobody knew what to do. My mother and grandmother both returned with the messenger, and I well remember the terror and shuddering fear of the few hours of darkness that followed. I seemed to be in the visible and tangible presence of Death. The darkness was filled with shrouded forms, and I listened to catch the rustle of their ghostly garments, and shrunk from the cold touch of dead hands, or the blighting kiss of dead lips. It was not until the dawning light had strengthened, and chased the shadows from my room, that I fell asleep. When I awoke at last, and stole down stairs, the family were at breakfast, sitting around the long table so solemnly and quietly, that I needed no words to tell me that some dread thing was near.

Mr. Myram was sinking rapidly when my mother and grandmother entered the cabin. A death-like cold was stealing over him, and his feeble tongue almost refused utterance. Aunt Easter announced, in loud tones, that he was dying, and the whole family stood idly by, as if awaiting the change they had no power to avert.

Both my mother and my grandmother had seen much of the epidemic, and they had witnessed more than one of those strange paroxysms that so simulated death. Against Aunt Easter's loud remonstrances, who declared that they would kill him, they made every effort to restore warmth and sensation to the cold limbs, and to rouse the benumbed faculties by the application of powerful stimulants. Their efforts, however, were in vain, and just in the grey of morning he breathed his last.

Clarry had accompanied my mother home, and now sat at the breakfast-table, with a strange sobriety of mien. She had been weeping very bitterly, but had grown quiet, and was, evidently, quite unable as yet to comprehend her loss.

There was a funeral in the little log-cabin—a country funeral, with its long train of country wagons. The singers stood in long lines in the yard, for the house was far too small to hold all who came; and their sweet voices went out upon the air, and up into the sky, in the ancient tune of China—that exquisitely solemn and mournful air that is associated with the last services above the dead in many hearts. The minister offered up his simple, heartfelt prayer, and spoke a few words of comfort to the bereaved family. Then the plain coffin was borne out of the log-cabin as reverently as if the dust it contained had once been robed in purple, and dwelt in a palace. It was borne to the burial ground, and lowered into the grave, and the first shovelful of dirt rattled hollowly upon it; there were a few more words of prayer, and then stout arms soon filled the grave. When it was done, all stood reverently round with uncovered heads, while my grandfather, in the name of the bereaved widow, thanked her neighbors "for their kindness in burying her dead out of her sight."

Slowly the group of neighbors dispersed—some lingering to drop a tear over graves dear as the last resting-places of *their* dead, or to chat in sober tones of country news. In a little while, where those dark forms had been, were only green hillocks and waving grass, and white tombstones, and one new grave showing brown among the rank verdure around.

Granny Bloom sickened and died next, and then the pestilence passed on, leaving the little log-cabin for the white farm-house beyond the woods, where it robbed loving parents of all their children, sparing neither beauty nor the strength of young manhood.

Manifold were the "signs and warnings," and the "forerunners" which Mrs. Myram had vouchsafed her in this period of affliction. Now it was a deep stain of blood upon the floor just at her feet as she sat at table, now a continuous low knocking for successive windy Autumn nights, now lights in the burial ground, advancing straight from the gate to her husband's grave—all betokening another death in the family. And, though Clarry irreverently talked about the choice meal that Pussy made of a sparrow beneath the table, and of loose boards upon the roof shaken by the Autumn wind, and reported how Dannie Sherman had gone with a lantern at night to catch his father's horse, which when wanted to be ridden after the doctor, was found to have jumped over the low grave-yard fence, she would not be diverted from her belief in supernatural agencies, nor her mournful anticipations by any such common-place explanations. And, even when the months rolled on, and death did not again enter her family, she still insisted that the "signs" she had seen and heard "meant something."

Very humble and toilsome, for many years, were the future lives of the widow and her children. Aunt Easter went away to live with some distant friends, soon after her mother's death. John and Samuel worked for the farmers round about, and Clarry went out to service. All three attended the district school whenever it was possible, and were among the best scholars. Samuel at last worked his way up to a knowledge of surveying and civil engineering, and now holds a high situation under Government.

John, who was a cooper, probably because his father had been, and left a shop and tools in which the boy could spend his leisure moments, turned out a shrewd business man. He is now a rich contractor. His mother lives with him, and the last time I saw her, she drew me aside to tell me in a whisper, lest John's lady-wife should hear her, that his little daughter had been teaching her to read, and that she could make out a chapter of the Bible pretty well. Her handsome silk dress, and fine lace cap, and the beautiful room in which she sat, were in wondrous contrast with that rude log-cabin in which she had lived, and the coarse garments which she wore of old.

Clarry married long ago. She grew handsome as she dawned into womanhood, and had lovers and admirers innumerable. She was always discreet and enforced respect, and bye and bye she married a wealthy young farmer, and is now at the head of a large and well-ordered household. There is a young Clara grown up under her roof, so much like the elfin child with brown face and tangled black locks, whom I knew of old, that I scarce can separate the Clara of the present from the Clarry of the past. There is the same propensity for hoydenish sports, the same fearlessness of danger, the same rapidity of motion and expertness in every task, and the same love for gorgeous coloring. Her father says she must be a changeling, but if she but grows up as good and beautiful as her mother, he will forgive the fairies for their meddlesome tricks.

The mystery which hung about Godfrey Myram, and so impressed my childish imagination, received at last a very practical solution. When very young, and just entering upon a career which was to be crowned by all the facilities for the best of education, he had mortally offended his friends by a hasty and mistaken marriage with Mary Bloom, whose pretty face blinded him to the weakness of her intellect and the depth of her ignorance. Perhaps he fancied he could still raise himself, and bring his wife continually to his own level. But he found his mistake. His friends cast him off—he was poor and burdened with his wife's helpless family, and a fast-increasing one of his own. He lost heart and courage; his energy was gone, and only a gloomy dogged despair remained. He left his native town and took up his abode in the log-cabin where he, a few years later, died, first binding all the family to entire silence about himself or his antecedents. Silent, gloomy, and despairing, he lived and died. Well was it for those who came after him that, with his acuteness of intellect, they also inherited, from some source, a determined will and energy to meet and overcome all obstacles.

* * *

SURE SOURCES OF COMFORT.

It is the privilege of a thinking being to withdraw from the objects that solicit his senses, and turn his thoughts inward on himself. For my own part, I often mitigate the pain arising from the little misfortunes and disappointments that checker human life, by this introversion of my faculties, wherein I regard my own soul as the image of her Creator, and receive great consolation from beholding those perfections which testify her divine original, and lead me into some knowledge of her everlasting archetype.

But there is not any property or circumstance of my being that I contemplate with more joy than my immortality. I can easily overlook any present momentary sorrow, when I reflect that it is in my power to be happy a thousand years hence. If it were not for this thought, I had rather be an oyster than a man, the most stupid and senseless of animals, than a reasonable mind, tortured with an extreme innate desire of that perfection which it despairs to obtain.

It is with great pleasure that I behold instinct, reason, and faith, concurring to attest this comfortable truth. It is revealed from heaven, it is discovered by philosophers; and the ignorant, unenlightened part of mankind have a natural propensity to believe it. It is an agreeable entertainment to reflect on the various shapes under which this doctrine has appeared in the world. The Pythagorean transmigration, the sensual habitations of the Mahometan, and the shady realms of Pluto, do all agree in the main points, the continuation of our existence, and the distribution of rewards and punishments, proportioned to the merits or demerits of men in this life.

But in all these schemes there is something gross and improbable, that shocks a reasonable and speculative mind. Whereas nothing can be more rational and sublime than the Christian idea of a future state. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." The above-mentioned schemes are narrow transcripts of our present state: but in this indefinite description there is something ineffably great and noble. The mind of man must be raised to a higher pitch, not only to partake the enjoyments of the Christian paradise, but even to be able to frame any notion of them.

Nevertheless, in order to gratify our imagination, and by way of condescension to our low way of thinking, the ideas of light, glory, a crown, &c. are made use of to foreshadow that which we cannot directly understand. "The lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away, and behold all things are new. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light, and shall make them drink of the river of his pleasures; and they shall reign forever and ever. They shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

These are cheering reflections; and I have often wondered that men could be found so dull and phlegmatic, as to prefer the thought of annihilation before them; or so ill-natured, as to endeavor to persuade mankind to the disbelief of what is so pleasing and profitable even in the prospect; or so blind, as not to see that there is a Deity, and if there be, that this scheme of things flows from his attributes, and evidently corresponds with the other parts of his creation.

A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER.

* * *

HARD TO BELIEVE.

A Scotch paper is responsible for the promulgation of the following curious fact in natural history—if it be a fact. "Messrs. Thompson and Edmonson," says the editor, "fishermen, of Roosebeck, have discovered that the 'dowker,' a local name of the duck species, of which hundreds are often caught in the winter, lays its eggs on a sand-bank, called St. Helena, some few miles out at sea from Roosebeck and Piel, which is under water. They are hatched by the parent bird when so under the salt water, as they have been observed by Messrs. Thompson and Edmonson to go down and remain a time upon the eggs, and to repeat this till incubation is complete, when the young are brought up to the surface under the wings of the old ones. Up to the time of the discovery of this fact, it was supposed that they came from a distance at stated periods. A fine balmly day enabled the fishermen to take a boat and ascertain the fact.

TO ——.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

The palest flower in the lonely glen,
A blossom of the wild,
Looked up to the sky with trembling fear,
And a star looked down, and smiled.

Was he not beautiful, and bright,
With thousands bending to him?
Strange, that in simple tenderness,
That humble flower should woo him!

He shed his best and brightest beams,
To dazzle careless eyes;—
The pale flower caught some transient gleams,
And dimmed them with her sighs.

Yet never loved the Star the less,
Because with haughty bearing,
He deemed her worship, idleness,
Her love, scarce worth the wearing!

THE ABDUCTED HEIRESS.

BY MRS. CAROLINE INGRAHAM.

AUTHOR OF "SARAH PERCIVAL; OR, THE BRIDE OF THE HOUSE OF GOLD," ETC. ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York

CHAPTER XVI.

BRIDAL BELLS.

Some writers revel in the description of a wedding. I never care to speak at length of one. I am out of my latitude, entirely, when I approach the subject. I am ignorant of the number of flounces deemed requisite for the bridal dress, and of the texture and quality of the bridal veil. As regards the deeper mysteries of slippers, and all the little et ceteras of the toilet, I am completely at fault, and gloves and bridal favors are only stumbling blocks to me.

I must be pardoned, therefore, if I do not describe at length the three weddings, which shortly followed these hasty and somewhat characteristic wooings. Three weddings there certainly were, and all at one time—a proceeding which made the rustics gape with wonder, and remember the day, in after years, as "the day when the whole family up yonder got married." The worthy clergyman looked somewhat astonished at such wholesale proceedings, and the clerk was heard to say, he fancied an epidemic prevailed at Penryth. But little cared the happy pairs what remarks were made, as they whirled off in different directions from the church-door, to pass their honeymoons at a distance from home.

The marriages had been performed with little show of ceremony, for Saville feared lest the old familiar name of Erringcourt might strike too harshly on some ears, if heralded with any pompous announcement. So the marriages were simply announced, in an unobtrusive way, in a county paper, which, once read, was soon forgotten, and which rarely found its way to the great metropolis. The *ruse* succeeded—no one glanced a second time at the names, and the enemies of Justus Erringcourt little knew that he was, in reality, close beside them, neither disgraced nor wretched, but honored, distinguished, and enjoying such happiness as seldom falls to the lot of man.

The happy smiles with which the whole wedding party met once more, in the pleasant drawing-room of Penryth, when a month had passed away, would almost have caused a confirmed misanthrope to believe in the innate goodness of poor human nature. One month of the most intimate communion had passed—and no one seemed grave or sorrowful—all were gay and cheerful as ever.

They gathered around the open window together, as the long twilight came on. A quiet melancholy seemed stealing over every one—a sadness pleasant to the soul.

The colonel was the first to break the silence.

"Well—here we are—all connected by the closest ties—and once more at home. How many summer evenings may find us here? We will grow to be old and gray together here, my boy," he added, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder.

Saville (as he still called himself) smiled, but there was a saddened look in his dark gray eyes.

"We shall be often with you, I have no doubt, George, but perfect peace and rest are not for me. You know I am, in reality, an exiled man."

"Pshaw—a mere folly, for which the world will grant you absolution any day."

"Perhaps so," said Saville, gravely. "But you forget that among those I used to call my friends, George, are some who look upon me as a murderer—some I can never meet this side of the grave. No—England is no place for me. But my Eveleen is not afraid to share my wanderings—are you, love?"

His wife looked up at him with a smile.

"I am like Ruth, my dear husband, and can only say, 'Where thou goest, I will go.' I am ready to follow you to the world's end, if need be, for it is very sweet to be with one we love—I never knew how sweet, till now."

It was beautiful to see how instinctively the married pairs drew nearer each other as she spoke.

Saville looked at her tenderly.

"I fear I am not worthy of such a guardian angel," he said, abruptly, and turning away, he walked to a window at the farther end of the room, and let the heavy damask curtains fall behind him.

"It is his way," said Eveleen, gazing after him, with a shade of sadness in her beautiful face. "We will not notice it, and in a little while he will return."

They talked quietly about their future prospects, which were, as yet, somewhat unsettled. But Justina, after listening a few moments, rose and stole after her father.

She found him looking out at the lodge gate that showed faintly through the trees.

"Is it you, my child?" he said, as she came and laid her hand on his.

"Yes, father. What are you thinking of, that you look so serious?"

He eyed her with a troubled glance.

"Just then I was thinking of you, Justina."

"Of me?"

"Of our meeting by the lodge gate, not quite two months ago, my child."

She colored deeply.

"Nay, never look down and blush, my child, because we were mistaken in our own hearts. Let us rather thank God that, in his mercy, he saved us from crime."

He drew her nearer to him, and leaned his head against the cold glass of the window. It was some time before Justina spoke again.

"Father."

"Well, my child?"

"I have something here I wish to show to you, if you will not be angry."

"What is it?"

She drew a miniature from her bosom, and touching the spring of the case, laid it open in his hand. He started as if an accusing spirit had risen up before him, when his eyes fell upon the face. For it was Rose—the neglected and deserted wife, who had died alone, and among strangers, for his sake. And yet not that Rose—not that faded, broken flower which was lying under the turf of the bleak New England hills. This was the young and beautiful girl, who had sprung up in his path like a vision of light—only to be trampled upon and thrown aside. The large, dark eyes were fixed upon him with an eager, happy look—the rich coloring of lip and cheek, defied the hand of time—and the smile of hope and pleasure that lingered there—it cut him to the heart as he remembered how it must have faded forever—and bowing his head, he wept, with his child, above that picture, in an agony of remorse.

"She hung it around my neck when she was dying," whispered Justina, as he grew calmer. "Is it like her, father?"

"Too like—too like. Oh, Justina, if she had but lived to forgive——"

He paused, remembering Eveleen.

"All is for the best," said Justina, softly. "But, father, is there not one spot on earth where you and I should stand together?"

"You mean——"

"My mother's grave."

"Yes, my child. One day we will linger there. You have no memory of her?"

"How could I? She died when I was born."

"True—I had forgotten. But has no one ever spoken to you of her?"

"Mrs. Moore, with whom I used to live, has often told me how beautiful and good she was. I must go back and see Mrs. Moore, father. I remember well how kind she was to me when I was a child."

"But were you happy there, Justina?"

"Very. I have never been so happy since, till now."

What, in that bleak, cold country?"

"It is neither bleak nor cold," said Justina, eager to defend the home of her childhood, and to rouse him from the painful reverie into which he seemed plunged, as he contemplated the face of his dead wife. "That is, when one once gets used to it. It is a beautiful place, father—so grand, so wild and free. I really wish——"

She paused and hesitated. He looked up.

"Well, what do you wish?"

"That we could go to America at once. Alfred and I both prefer to travel for a time, before we settle down together; and it would be such a delightful trip, if you and dear mamma would go with us—and Colonel and Mrs. Sair, too."

"I fancy I should like it; and as you say, Justina, one may as well do a thing quickly."

"Did I say that, father?"

He smiled good-naturedly.

"I dare say you thought it, Justina. Come, we will go and propose this change of scene to our friends, and see how they receive it."

He looked wistfully at the picture he still held, kissed it, and gave it back to Justina.

"You had best keep it, my child. Heaven forbid that I should pain the living by my sorrow for the dead."

Justina kissed the hand he held out to her.

"Father, I am sure you have a kind heart," she said, touched by the delicacy of the action.

"I should have had it twenty years ago," he said, in a low voice, and drawing her hand through his arm, he went up to the group who had deserted the window, and gathered round the fire, still talking busily.

"Well, good people, have you concluded on any immediate plan of action?" he asked.

"Not one," said the colonel. "We have too many."

"Then listen to mine. My daughter has a strong desire to visit the friends who were so kind to her in her childhood. I, too, should thank them. Why not go to America?"

There was a moment's silence. Then Alfred took Justina's hand, and said, with a smile,—

"It is enough for me that my wife wishes to go. Count me as one of the party."

"And me, also," said Eveleen, with proud humility. "It is fitting that I should ask pardon of those kind hearts I wronged so many years ago."

"And you, George?" said Saville.

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"Faith, I can't say I see much fun in the thing. I believe I'll stick by England, and keep the hearth warm till you come back. What with the hounds, and going to town, I think we can manage to kill time."

"I must stay with George of course," added his wife. "He would be entirely lost without me, and I cannot say I have any great inclination for the journey. So, if you go, salute America for me—see all the wonderful things you can, and I will stay here to welcome you back, and hear all your stories of adventure over a regular English tea-table."

"So let it be," said Saville. And drawing nearer the fire, they discussed the probable events of such a journey, till the would-be travellers grew enthusiastic at the thought of the land they had never seen, and the dangers they had never encountered.

And so it happened that the next steamer that sailed for America had among her list of passengers the names of General Saville and lady, and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Ernstein.

CHAPTER XVII.

"HOME AGAIN."

In the quiet silence of the Autumn evening, two carriages drove slowly up the road that led by "Murderer's Poad," to the little New England village referred to in the last chapter of our story. In the first sat Justina and her husband—in the one that followed, Eustace Saville and his wife.

All were silent. To three among this little party the return was fraught with many painful feelings. Saville looked pale and abstracted, and when the carriages stopped at the little country inn, where poor Rose had lived, he trembled, and looked uneasily at his daughter.

Their host led the way, with low bows, into the old familiar parlor, where Eveleen De Courcey had first met the child of her rival. But time had worked many changes, and he failed to recognize either the stately lady, or the young girl, who had, as it were, grown up under his very eyes.

"Landlord," said Justina, as he was leaving the room. "Does Mr. Moore, the farmer, still live in the old place?"

"Who? Oh, yes, I remember. No, my lady, he died some ten years ago."

"Dead! And his wife—what of her?" asked Justina, with trembling interest.

"She is alive still, and lives in the old homestead."

"You may go."

She went and laid her hand upon her father's arm, and looked up into his face. He smiled sadly—he understood the mute appeal.

"Yes, my child, we will go. And, Eveleen, my dear," he added, turning to his wife, "you and Alfred must be company for one another while we are away. We will be with you by evening."

They went out together—and entered the carriage which was still standing at the door. Well did Justina know the locality they were about to visit. It was but a few rods from the dear home where her early years had been spent—and from the window of her little chamber she had looked out many a morning to see the sun shining on her mother's grave. She told her father so.

The carriage halted at the gate of the rustic cemetery, and they alighted.

"Remain here," said Saville to the servant. "We shall not return for some time."

The servant bowed, and composed himself for a comfortable nap upon his box, and father and daughter entered the grave-yard.

The grave of Rose Erringcourt was in no way different from those which surrounded it. The same plain, gray slab, with its half-effaced letters, marked her resting-place, and weeds and sweet brier grew in profusion around.

The repentant husband sank upon his knees beside it, and laid his cheek upon the cold ground.

"Rose—Rose," he cried, "is it forever too late? Oh, forgive me—forgive me!"

"Dear father," said the sweet voice of Justina—"she forgave you when she died."

"Oh, but if she could only speak to me—if she would only look on me once more!" groaned the unhappy man.

Was it a dream? Or did a voice, indeed, pronounce his name? He listened eagerly—and again it seemed to sigh beside him.

"Justina," he cried, eagerly, "do you hear anything?"

"Nothing, father," she said. looking curiously at him.

"It could not be all fancy. Justina, I believe your sainted mother is beside us now. Oh, speak, sweet angel," he murmured, in a broken voice, while the heavy tears were falling on his cheeks—"speak, and say that I am forgiven!"

Justina sobbed and turned away, feeling his grief too sacred a thing to witness. But as she did so, her eyes fell upon a little grave close beside her mother's, and she uttered a suppressed scream.

"What is it, my child?" cried Saville, springing towards her in alarm.

"Father, look—look there!"

There, on the little gray headstone at his feet, he read these strange words:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
of
JUSTINA ERRINGCOURT,
Who died, lamented by all, in the eighth year of
her age,
This stone was erected
by those
To whom she was dear as an own and only child.
"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

She stood beside her own grave! A thousand strange emotions filled her mind. Looking back to those early years, it seemed, indeed, as if the little child was lying there beneath the woman's feet. And always, in after days, long after that little grave was filled up, and the shock of its first discovery passed away, an indefinable feeling came over her when she thought of it, and she seemed to miss a part of herself, which had been buried there, and could never return to her again.

She stood in silence, reading the simple epitaph over and over again, till the hot tears filled her eyes.

"What does this mean, Justina?"

"Father, it means that the hearts I wounded so, still loved me, and mourned for me as if I were dead. We are here by my mother's grave—but there, in the little farm-house yonder, lives one who was kind as a mother ever could be."

"Come, then, to her at once," said Saville, shuddering, as he cast a last look at the two graves, over which the shadows of night were gathering.

They crossed the field, and went up the well-worn path that led to the farm-house door. A pale, pleasant-faced woman, with mild blue eyes, answered to their knock, and asked them to enter. Justina pressed her father's hand, and looked eagerly at her foster-mother, as they all stood in the great kitchen.

"I came to ask you a few questions," said Justina, in a trembling voice. You once brought up a child by the name of Justina Erringcourt?"

Her mother started and turned towards her.

"I did—I did—and the child died."

"No, Mrs. Moore, she did not die," said Justina, looking steadily at her. "She lived—but she left you."

"She lived—my child is still alive?" said the good woman, gazing at her with her heart in her eyes. "Oh, you would not tell me a falsehood?"

"No, Mrs. Moore—she lives and would be happy if she could only gain your forgiveness. Some day she will enter this room and ask it."

"She has it already a thousand times over. But tell me, when shall I see her? Where is she?"

"She almost broke your heart by her flight," said Justina. "But her own has never rested since. And when she comes for forgiveness, she will ask it thus."

She sank upon her knees, and throwing aside the hat she wore, looked up at Mrs. Moore. The farmer's wife started, turned pale, and clasped her hands.

"Oh, who are you? Speak—speak."

"This gentleman is my father—and I—oh, mother—mother—I am your own little Justina, come back to you once more."

With a cry of joy the kind-hearted woman threw her arms around her child, and wept bitterly. For a long time no one spoke—but there was happiness in the little room.

When the first joyous greeting had passed, they sat quietly down together, and Justina, with her head upon her mother's breast, told her all that had passed, and received her full and free forgiveness for all she had done.

"I have been so lonely here, my darling, since your father died," said Mrs. Moore, sadly. "The old homestead is but a dreary place, now, my child."

"You shall be so no more," said the girl, with a kiss. "I have a beautiful home in England, and a kind and noble husband. You shall go with me."

"Ah. that can never be," said Mrs. Moore, shaking her head. "I am too old to move now."

"Let me hope, my dear Madam, that you will consent?" said Saville, taking her hand, and speaking with that sunny smile, which was so rare and so beautiful upon his face. "Your presence alone is wanting to complete our happiness. You have done much already—do one thing more. Let, or sell the farm, and return to England with us."

"You have a kind heart," she answered, looking at him with a pleased expression upon her face—"and I do not wonder poor Rose loved you so."

"For the sake of Rose, then—for the sake of her child—go with us."

"I will."

There were no spoken thanks—but the eyes of father and daughter looked them all. And when they left her, to rejoin Alfred and Mrs. Saville at the inn, it was with the express understanding that she should find a tenant for her house, and be ready to join them when they returned from a trip through the southern and western States which they had in contemplation.

I doubt if any human being was ever happier than Justina, as she lay down to sleep that night. But beside her father's pillow a spirit-form kept watch and ward, and his dreams were all of his faded Rose.

It was late in the following spring before the travellers took passage again for England. And then Mrs. Moore was with them.

My tale is almost done. I have only to point you to a quiet English home—the country seat of Alfred Ernstein. Here, during the pleasant summer months, you may see the whole group of friends. Time or change have never yet come between them—let us hope it may be long before one of that happy group is missing.

Sometimes in the parlors, or out upon the lawn, —but generally in the nursery, and always where Justina's children are, you will see the mild face, the bent figure, and pleasant blue eyes of Mrs. Moore. She holds a high place in the family, and the children believe in her to the greatest extent. She is their oracle and their playmate—and second only to "mamma and papa" in their hearts.

Of these children—this happy group of six—one is dearest to the heart of General Saville. A little proud-faced maiden, with blue eyes and sunny hair. She is named Rose; and though her brothers and sisters sit beside their father, mother, or grandmothers, or play merrily with Colonel Sair—her place is always upon her grandfather's knee. The old man sees in that young face, another, which is hidden from his sight forever—and holds the sunny head to his breast, as he sits and dreams.

Over the grave of Rose Erringcourt a costly marble monument has been raised. And yet, does the sleeper rest more quietly? Oh no! The winds of winter howl around the buried head—the mild airs of spring—the hot sunshine of summer—all, are there as before. And the leaves of autumn rustle beneath the tread of those who pause to gaze upon that grave, and the smaller one beside it, whose headstone has been taken away. Peace—peace alike to the living and the dead!

[THE END.]

INSTINCTIVE AFFECTION.

Whence is it that the affection of parents is so intense to their offspring? Is it because they generally find such resemblances in what they have produced, as that thereby they think themselves renewed in their children, and are willing to transmit themselves to future times? Or is it because they think themselves obliged, by the dictates of humanity, to nourish and rear what is placed so immediately under their protection; and what by their means is brought into this world, the scene of misery, of necessity? These will not come up to it. Is it not rather the good providence of that being who in a super-eminent degree protects and cherishes the whole race of mankind, his sons and creatures? How shall we, any other way, account for this natural affection, so signally displayed throughout every species of the animal creation, without which the course of nature would quickly fail, and every various kind be extinct? Instances of tenderness in the most savage brutes are so frequent, that quotations of that kind are altogether unnecessary.

If those who have no particular concern in them, take a secret delight in observing the gentle dawn of reason in babes; if their ears are soothed with their half-forming and aiming at articulate sounds; if they are charmed with their pretty mimicry, and surprised at the unexpected starts of wit and cunning in these miniatures of man; what transport may we imagine in the breasts of those, into whom natural instinct hath poured tenderness and fondness for them! how amiable is such a weakness in human nature! or rather, how great a weakness is it to give humanity so reproachful a name! The bare consideration of paternal affection should create a more grateful tenderness in children toward their parents, than we generally see; and the silent whispers of nature be attended to, though the laws of God and man did not call aloud.

DO NOT DESPISE SMALL THINGS.

The possibility of a great change being introduced by very slight beginnings may be illustrated by the tale of the vizier, who, having offended his master, was condemned to perpetual captivity in a lofty tower. At night his wife came to weep below his window. "Cease your grief," said the sage, "go home for the present, and return hither when you have procured a live black beetle, together with a little *ghee* (or buffalo's butter,) three clews, one of the finest silk, another of stout packthread, and another of whipcord; finally, a stout coil of rope." When she again came to the foot of the tower, provided according to her husband's commands, he directed her to touch the head of the insect with a little of the *ghee*, to tie one end of the silk-thread around him, and to place the reptile on the wall of the tower. Seduced by the smell of the butter which he conceived to be in store somewhere above him, the beetle continued to ascend till he reached the top, and thus put the vizier in possession of the end of the silk-thread, who drew up the pack-thread by means of the silk, the small cord by means of the pack-thread, and, by means of the cord, a stout rope capable of sustaining his own weight,—and so at last escaped from the place of his duresse.

ANCIENT USE OF PRUSSIC ACID.

The bitter almond contains the constituents of prussic acid and a peculiar volatile oil, resembling the peach-blossom in its odor. Both are developed when the almond is bruised, and brought in contact with water. When the bitter almond, therefore, is masticated, and receives moisture in the mouth and stomach, the prussic acid then formed operates as a powerful sedative upon the nervous system, and renders the body less susceptible of the influence of excitants—consequently of wine. It forms, as it were, the balance of the opposite scale, and preserves the equilibrium between the sinking which would result from its use, were no wine taken, and the intoxication which would follow the excess of wine, were the bitter almonds not eaten. Plutarch informs us that the sons of the physician of the Emperor of Tiberius knew this fact; and although most intrepid topers, yet they kept themselves sober, by eating bitter almonds.

HUMAN HELPLESSNESS.—Animals go rightly, according to the ends of their creation, when they are left to themselves: they follow their instinct and are safe. But it is otherwise with man: the ways of life are a labyrinth for him. His infancy does not stand more in need of a mother's care, than his moral and intellectual faculties require to be nursed and fostered; and where these are left to starve for want of nutriment, how infinitely more deplorable is his condition than that of the beasts who perish.

JUSTICE.—THE PERSIAN EMPEROR.

There is no virtue so truly great and godlike as justice. Most of the other virtues are the virtues of created beings, or accommodated to our nature as we are men. Justice is that which is practised by God himself, and to be practised in its perfection by none but him. Omniscience and omnipotence are requisite for the full exertion of it. The one to discover every degree of uprightness or iniquity in thoughts, words, and actions; the other to measure out and impart suitable rewards and punishments.

As to be perfectly just is an attribute in the divine nature, to be so to the utmost of our abilities is the glory of a man. Such a one, who has the public administration in his hands, acts like the representative of his maker, in recompensing the virtuous and punishing the offender. By the extirpating of a criminal he averts the judgment of heaven, when ready to fall upon an impious people; or, as Cato expresses it much better, in a sentiment conformable to his character.

"When by just vengeance impious mortals perish,
The gods behold their punishment with pleasure,
And lay the uplifted thunderbolt aside.

When a nation once loses its regard to justice; when they do not look upon it as something venerable, holy and inviolable; when any of them dare presume to lessen, or terrify those who have the distribution of it in their hands; when a judge is capable of being influenced by any thing but law, or a cause may be recommended by anything that is foreign to its own merits, we may venture to pronounce that such a nation is hastening to its ruin.

We always rejoice when we see a tribunal filled with a man of an upright and inflexible temper, who in the execution of his country's laws can overcome all private fear, resentment, solicitation and even pity itself. Such men are to be reckoned among the greatest national blessings, and should have that honor paid them whilst they are yet living, which will not fail to crown their memory when dead. Whatever passion enters into a sentence or decision, so far will there be in it a tincture of injustice. In short, justice discards party, friendship, kindred, and is therefore always represented as blind, that we may suppose her thoughts are wholly intent on the equity of a cause, without being diverted or prejudiced by objects foreign to it.

We shall conclude this article with a Persian story, which is very suitable to the present subject:

As one of the sultans lay encamped on the plains of Avala, a certain great man of the army entered by force into a peasant's house, and finding his wife very handsome, turned the good man out of his dwelling and usurped his place. The peasant complained the next morning to the sultan, and desired redress; but was not able to point out the criminal. The emperor, who was very much incensed at the injury done to the poor man, told him that probably the offender might give him another visit, and if he did, commanded him immediately to repair to his tent and acquaint him with it. Accordingly, within two or three days the officer entered again the peasant's house, and turned the owner out of doors; who thereupon applied himself to the imperial tent, as he was ordered. The sultan went in person, with his guards, to the poor man's house, where he arrived about midnight. As the attendants carried each of them a flambeau in their hands, the sultan, after having ordered all the lights to be put out, gave the word to enter the house, find out the criminal and put him to death. This was immediately executed, and the corpse laid out upon the floor by the emperor's command. He then bid every body light his flambeau, and stand about the dead body. The sultan approaching it, looked about the face, and immediately fell upon his knees in prayer. Upon his rising up, he ordered the peasant to set before him whatever food he had in his house. The peasant brought out a good deal of coarse fare, of which the emperor ate very heartily. The peasant seeing him in good humor, presumed to ask of him, why he had ordered the flambeaux to be put out before he had commanded the adulterer should be slain? Why, upon their being lighted again, he looked upon the face of the dead body, and fell down in prayer? And why, after this he had ordered meat to be set before him, of which he now eat so heartily? The sultan being willing to gratify the curiosity of his host, answered him in this manner: "Upon hearing the greatness of the offence which had been committed by one of the army, I had reason to think it might have been one of my own sons, for who else would have been so audacious and presuming! I gave orders therefore for the lights to be extinguished, that I might not be led astray, by partiality or compassion, from doing justice on the criminal. Upon the lighting of the flambeaux a second time, I looked upon the face of the dead person, and, to my unspeakable joy, found it was not my son. It was for this reason that I immediately fell upon my knees and gave thanks to God. As for my eating heartily of the food you have set before me, you will cease to wonder at it, when you know that the great anxiety of mind I have been in upon this occasion, since the first complaints you brought me, has hindered me from eating anything from that time until this very moment."

TAKE THE BITTER WITH THE SWEET.

The sweet and bitter ordinarily accompany each other in this life; at least, the sweet must be carefully extracted from the bitter. Such is the peculiar province of that little, though busy insect, the bee. But must it go deprived of its honey, because, forsooth, it is secured at the expense of long pursuit, toil and endurance? No more is it becoming to man, who is determined upon the means of subsistence and life, to shrink from the ordinary dangers and sufferings incident to their attainment.

HOW TO SELECT A WIFE.—When a young woman, while in the act of sweeping, approaches you with kind words and gracious looks, and politely requests you to move, for she wants to sweep where you are sitting, depend upon it, she is the girl you want, so far, certainly, as temper is concerned; for never is a woman so petulant, so domineering, as when she has a broom in her hand, except it is when she has a mop.

THE WAY TO GET KNOWLEDGE.—Oftener ask than decide questions; this is the way to better your knowledge. Your ears teach you, not your tongue; so long as you are ignorant you need not be ashamed to be instructed

TALENTS AND GENIUS.—He who in the same given time can produce more than another, has vigor; he who can produce more and better has talents; he who can produce what no one else can, has genius.

PRESERVATION OF WATER.—Water has been preserved, it is said, for seven years, by adding to it oxide of manganese in the proportion of 1 3-4 to 250, and agitating the liquid once a fortnight.

"THE BARK THAT NEVER CAN RETURN."

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

There floated forth a silent bark
Upon a solemn sea,
Its drooping flag was torn and dark,
No light-tower lent a warning spark—
Alas! alas! it was the bark
That bore my dreams from me.

That bark—the classic one of yore,
That fled o'er ocean's blue—
The mocking, winged thing that bore
Young Theseus from the storied shore,
Looked not so sad in lonely yore
To Ariadne's view!

There was a pictured landscape there
That I had knelt before;
Some with blue eyes and gold-hued hair,
Some with dark beauty—oh, so rare!
Were wandering in the starlight there,
To meet my gaze—no more.

That summer-scene was sweet with flowers,
Of every form and hue;
And dark-green trees and myrtle-bowers,
Where song-birds came in dreamy hours—
Ah, me! ah, me! that on those flowers
Should fall a Upas dew!

A palace that the angels made,
And painted for me there,
Slept softly in the light and shade,
And oft its marble halls displayed
A picture that my heart once made,
Which looked—so strangely fair.

I watched that bark with weary eyes
Float on, and on, and on—
At last the air grew sad with sighs,
A blackness settled on the skies,
Winds wailed, tears trembled in my eyes,
Waves rose—and fell—'twas gone!

Wrecked—with the beauty of my dreams—
The idols of my love;
Wrecked—with the many golden gleams
Caught from a sun whose farewell beams
Flashed burning mockery on the dreams
Worshiped all else above!

FOREST SKETCHES---NO. 19.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

ADVENTURE WITH ALLIGATORS.

After dinner, I carefully removed the skin from the body of my flamingo, and having set it for drying, by drawing it in shape over a frame, I went out to see the negroes hoe cotton. In the evening, after the tea-service had been removed, we put Uncle Abner in mind of the story he promised to tell us.

"O—yes," said he, removing the pipe from his mouth. "You mean my adventure in the swamp."

I told him that was it; and after he had laid away his pipe, and placed a moderate sized piece of tobacco in his cheek, he commenced as follows:—

"I've lived on this place a-going on to ten years. I came up here from New Orleans, and found this plantation going to rack and ruin, as fast as possible. The man that owned it, thought more of his whiskey-bottle, than he did of his fields, and the consequence was, that his place was not only heavily mortgaged, but nearly the whole of his growing crops were sold in advance. Some of the heaviest creditors wanted me to buy. While we were considering upon the subject, the owner died. He fell from his horse while drunk, and broke his neck. As this incumbrance was removed, I felt sure of safe possession, and made an offer, which was finally taken up. I got a cheap place. The negroes were worth more than I paid for the whole. But I wouldn't pay only so much; and I wouldn't take one negro without I could have the whole; for I wouldn't have the old family separated.

"Well—I bought and settled down here. But you ought to have seen and heard Mammy when I first brought her up here. She declared by all that was good, that she wouldn't stay in such a place."

"I only just wish you could 'a seen the place when we first come on to it," interposed the good dame. "My sakes alive! Such another lookin' hole you never *did* see."

"*Why*—Mammy!"

"You *know* 'twas!" persisted the matron.

"Ah—Mammy! You mustn't say so. You know 'twas a palace—a perfect paradise."

"Abner Smith, you know better. It wasn't no such thing. You are only plaguing me."

"Tzut, tzut, Mammy,—don't you remember how you said you never saw such a beautiful place?"

"Why—Abner Smith! You—you know better. But don't you believe him, (to us.) He's only tryin' to pester me."

Thus speaking, Mammy settled down behind her spectacles, wiped her nose, and with a sort of nervous shake of the head, resumed her knitting. She could not give up her knitting-needles. So much of old New England she stuck to persistently,—and much more, too. Aye—the inside of her "kitchen," as she invariably called her dining-room,—was Yankee throughout, when she could manage to banish the half-score of little wool-heads that generally hung about her after bits of cake and sweetmeats. Uncle Abner laughed at his wife's simple earnestness, and then proceeded,—

"Mammy's right about the looks of the place when we came, for——"

"*There!*—O, what a man!"

——"the poor fellow who had owned the numerous whiskey jugs we found scattered about, had thought of nothing but getting money enough to carry him to and from the tavern at Shreveport.

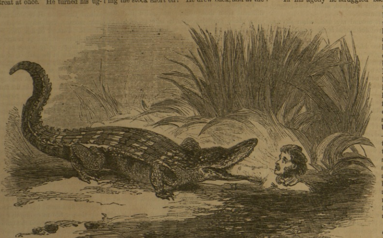
"Howsumever, that has little to do with my story; only I wanted ye should know how long I'd been here. I got settled down just nine years ago last spring. Along in August I took a notion one day to take a tramp in the swamp. My boys had told me there were plenty of ducks about there; though I afterwards found they were mistaken in one particular. There were ducks in the colder seasons, but I have seldom seen them here in the heat of summer.

"Howsumever—I owned some two hundred acres of that swamp, and I meant to see what 'twas made of. The boys were all busy, and I started off alone, only meaning to take a turn in by the lake, and find out what kinds of timber I'd got there. I took my rifle and knife, my old dog of course accompanying me.

"I entered the swamp half-a-mile below where the colonel went in, and found it very decent travelling until I got in beyond the point of the great lake. Here the way became more difficult, there being great tracts of soft mud, overgrown with grass, besides many bogs and pools. I found the timber to consist mostly of willow, honey-locust, cotton-wood, pawpaw, and buckeye, with any quantity of wild vines and creepers.

"I knew there was an immense bayou not far in, and this I wanted to find, so I looked sharp and pushed on. At the end of an hour, I found the object of my search. I reached the shore of the bayou by a sort of natural causeway formed by the trunks of trees which must have been gathering sward there for ages. I stood and gazed off upon the dark, dismal looking water, and made up my mind that I'd have a boat as soon as possible, and thus explore this vast solitude of forest sea.

"Birds were plenty there. They flew about in all directions, and so near me did they come, that I caught several with my hand, and after examining their plumage, I let them go again. But pretty soon I saw something else besides birds. A motion of the water close by where I stood arrested my attention, and upon turning my eyes that way, I saw a huge alligator come up and place his fore feet upon the bank. He saw me, and stopped; but he did not retreat at once. He turned his ugly head towards me, and reached further up on the bank, as though he would see what manner of thing I was. My dog barked and howled, but showed no disposition to attack the monstrous reptile there. But had the fellow been on dry land, old Tiger would have given him battle. The dog—we called him Tige—or Tiger—was a cross between the English bull, and the large mastiff—not full-blooded, howsumever—as his father was a cross between the bull-dog and the regular New-foundland. So you can imagine something of his size and strength. He was really a magnificent dog; and I don't stretch the point a bit when I say, that could a hundred dollars bring him back to me now, as he was then, I would pay it in an instant.



"Poor old Tige!" uttered the dame, fervently.

"Aye," responded the old man, in the same tone—"Poor old Tige! But he's gone."

"I watched the alligator a few moments, and then I aimed at his eye and fired. He slid back into the water, and, I tell ye, for a while there was considerable of a kick-up in that neighborhood. In less than a minute there were a dozen alligators flying about there, and I supposed they were going to make a meal from their unfortunate companion.

"By and by the monsters saw me, and came towards me; and three of them started directly up the bank at my feet. One thing was certain: They wern't afraid of me; and I wondered if they wouldn't like a meal of my flesh. One of the fellows that had started up the bank—a very large one, certainly eighteeen feet long—was coming towards me without any hesitation. I had reloaded my rifle, and with a quick aim I destroyed his left eye. He fell back, and the other two quickly followed him.

"I had frightened the alligators for the moment, but I knew enough of their habits to know that they would very soon come back; so I thought I had better be moving out of that. I withdrew a short distance and reloaded my rifle, and then started on. My intention was, to go back by the same way I had come, but I missed it, and came out in another place. Yet I knew my course—or, I supposed I did—and kept on. Ere long I came in sight of water again. It was a point of the great bayou. I stopped a moment to consider, and then struck across into a narrow opening towards the extreme point of the water.

"I had come to within a few yards of the shore, when I was stopped by a narrow strip of shallow, muddy water. It was not over five feet wide, and upon the opposite side, the grass grew tall and rank. I could leap it easily, and I gave the spring. I touched the grass—I touched the sward—I touched a very soft spot. I was in the mud to my knees! I attempted to raise one foot—the other settled!—I attempted to raise that one, and the first one settled. I was now in to the thighs! I laid my gun across the sward, and attempted to raise myself that way. But 'twas of no use. The more I struggled, the deeper I sank!

"Down—down—down, I went, until finally I had settled in up to my arm-pits! Oh! my Heaven! You can have no idea of how I felt at that moment. That I should ever get out of that mud appeared impossible. I dared to move my feet no more, for I could feel that there was yet soft mud beneath them. Of course my arms helped hold me up, but they would not do so if I should draw my body down by attempting to draw one of my feet up. I thought of my dog. Could I not pull myself up by him? He came at my call, and immediately tried to draw me out by seizing my frock in his teeth; but his own feet sank in, and he relinquished the task. I at length succeeded in getting him in front of me; but as I commenced to bear my weight upon him, and he found himself sinking, he sprang away, and once more made a fruitless attempt to set me free.

"Now can you imagine my situation? Just think of it: My arm-pits rested upon the sward, and I could feel that I was slowly, but surely, settling further and farther! There was an oppression about my heart, and my lungs could not move freely. My breath came hard, and I had every reason to believe that ere long it would be gone forever! I had torn up all the grass within reach in my vain struggles.

"Thus was I situated, when a new object of terror presented itself. I saw a shadow upon my right hand, and upon turning that way I beheld the head and shoulders of an enormous alligator! He saw me in an instant, and came quickly up the bank. I knew at once that he meant to attack me. My rifle was well bedaubed with mud, but the priming was dry. The monster came straight on, and the sluggish movement of the hot heavy air, was enough to bring to my nostrils the strong, rank, musky odor of the foul reptile.

"As soon as I could fairly collect my energies I levelled my peace and fired. I think the ball entered his mouth, which was partly open. At any rate he turned as quickly as he could and lumbered back to the water. I heard his heavy plash, and saw my dog spring to the bank and bark. I now saw what had drawn the alligator up. It was the dog. He had been frisking about, crying out with pain and fear on my behalf, and the horrid creature had seen and scented him. If this was so, then might not Tiger's barking draw up more? I I tried to call him back. He would come and gaze into my face a moment, and then rush back again.

"Presently I saw him start back, and utter a quick yell. My heart sank within me, for I knew another alligator was coming! And so it proved. Tiger slowly retreated, yelping as he did so; and pretty soon the great ugly head appeared above the edge of the bank. This one was larger than the other. He was all of eighteen feet long! He stopped a few moments after he gained the bank, and turned his long, horrid snout towards me. Then he looked at the dog, which stood at a safe distance barking furiously, and then turned his gaze once more upon me, and began to advance.

"I clubbed my rifle, and as he came near, I brought it down upon the top of his head, breaking the stock short off! He drew back, and at the same time opened his mouth, and then shut it with a crash.

"I noticed one thing; and that was, that the alligator did not yet sink into the mud. His fore feet were some two yards from me; so I saw that at that distance, the sward was tough enough to bear my weight.

"But I hadn't much time for study or reflection. The monster was approaching me again. I had raised the barrel of my rifle to give him another blow, when old Tiger sprang upon him. Under other circumstances the dog would not have ventured thus; but to save me, he forgot himself. The alligator gave one snap of his teeth, and the dog sprang towards his tail. In another instant that tail was raised and quick as thought it came down upon Tiger's devoted back. He gave one sharp, piteous howl; and as he struggled in the mud with his spine broken, the monster turned, and seizing him in his huge jaws, made off into the bayou!

"I heard the last stifled groan of my dog, and for a few moments I forgot my own danger. Poor old Tiger! He had been my almost constant companion for years, and to see him die thus, in his efforts to save me, was painful indeed. And after he had gone I reflected upon the use I might have made of him had I only thought of it in season. I could easily have sent him home; and of course when once there, he would have drawn some of the household out. But 'twas too late to think of that now. He was gone, and I was left alone. But I was not to be left alone a great while.

"During the presence of the last alligator I had been slowly sinking deeper into the mud! My shoulders were now just above the surface—the mud was almost up to my collar-bone. Oh! my soul! my soul! how I yelled and groaned! I shouted with all my might—I groaned in agony the most torturing—and then I cried like a child! I clapped my hands, and called out to God for help! What a death! What a death for a stout, strong, healthy man! To be strangled in that mud—to gradually sink—sink—sink—to the chin—to the lips—to the nose—the neck stretched, and the eyes glaring—the nostrils finally submerged—and the death-struggle commenced while yet the eyes could drink in the scene! I might tear away the mud with my hands for the while, but 'twould only be to prolong my agony.

"Under the fearful impulse of such thoughts I involuntarily made one more struggle. The only result was to draw me deeper into the mud!

"Just as I stopped my worse than vain efforts, and my voice had failed me from exhaustion of the lungs, I saw another alligator coming up over the bank. It was not the one which had taken the dog. It was, if anything, a larger one. He came fully up ere he stopped to take an observation. He hesitated but a moment, however. He seemed to see that my head and shoulders offered something that would suit his palate, and he moved towards me.

"I had seen, from the tracks of the dog, and the movements of the second alligator, that at a distance of four feet from me, towards the shore, there was a firm footing. I had evidently sunk into a sort of mud-pot which made out from the narrow strip of water over which I had leaped.

"As I saw the monster start towards me I thought of my rifle-barrel. I looked for it, but 'twas lost in the mud. On the next instant I thought of my knife. It was at my left side, and I knew it could not be very deep down, as the sheath hung loosely upon my belt. I plunged my left hand down, and reached it. It was a large hunting-knife, with a buckhorn handle, and very strong and sharp. I had heard of the way the African savages sometimes killed crocodiles, by covering the arm with thick leather, and then forcing a knife down the capacious throat of the victim.

"So I seized my knife in my right hand, and prepared for the meeting. My arm was free, as I had made quite a hollow in the mud below the shoulder. It was not even a case of life or death with me then. It was simply a choice of deaths: Whether I would sink to my own grave in the bosom of the swamp, or be made the food of an alligator. So I had no fear of my enemy above the mere horror of being eaten up. As he came nearer he found that the ground was soft, but he worked his way along; for even though his legs should sink down, his huge belly would offer a resistance sufficient to prevent his legs from sinking further.

"At length his snout was close upon me, and his mouth was open. He struggled forward still further, his fore feet being now in the mud, but still serviceable. He dropped his lower jaw—his mouth was fairly yawning—his terrible teeth gleamed like so many spikes—and he was ready to bite. With a quick movement I thrust the knife deep into his open mouth, striking the center of the lower jaw beyond the tongue. He closed it and started back. Or, he closed it all he could. The knife was nearly perpendicular, and as the handle came in contact with the roof of the mouth, of course the jaws were stopped. The front teeth were six inches apart.

"I instinctively clung to the knife, and as the monster started back he at the same time gave me a start from my miry prison! He raised me all of four inches! In an instant more he threw his mouth open, and as he did so I thrust my arm forward with all my might. The blade was driven into the bone of the bottom of the mouth, and this last movement turned the handle down to the opening of the throat, where it became buried and braced in the tough flesh.

"In his agony he struggled back. He found that he had bitten something that hurt him. He shook and reared his head, but he could not break my hold. No, no,—my life lay then in that right hand! Did the fingers relax one grain I should be lost! Up—up—up—I came from the sticky mud, the wounded, suffering monster leaping and working his way back as fast as the nature of his foothold would allow.

"Why—I couldn't realize it! I knew I was coming out—out—out—but it seemed more like a dream than like reality. But at length the alligator got his fore feet upon good foundation, and with one mighty effort he broke from me, and turned towards the water, with the knife still braced in his throat.

"And where was I? I was stretched at full length upon my belly along the crushed and bedaubed grass! The powerful creature had just drawn me clear of the mud, and laid me out so that I could not sink in again. Carefully I crept upon the hard sward, and when I regained my feet I started. I simply looked over into the water, but saw nothing of my enemies or their canine victim.

"Carefully I picked my way back over the narrow stream, and then struck for home. I was weak and faint, and my garments were heavy with mud. But I struggled on. I reached my doorstone just as the last tints of day were disappearing in the West, and night closing in upon the scene.

"I was safe—I was uninjured; but I had lost my dog, and in return I had gained a bit of knowledge which has probably been of much service to me since:—Never make a leap in a strange swamp until you know where you are going to alight."

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mrs. E. B. W. wishes to know the cause of, and a cure for, the "worm pimple." According to medical authorities the presence of the black point in the face (by many supposed to be animalculæ) is occasioned by the torpid state of the skin, or, in other words, by the inability of the skin to perform its proper functions. The cause of these black points is therefore neither more nor less than an obstruction of the pores of the skin; the perspiration being allowed to accumulate, the mouths of the pores become clogged, irritation ensues, a pimple rises, and the black point becomes prominent. They appear in persons of all ages, increasing in numbers in old age, and also during sickness. The only way to be rid of them is to enable the skin to do its own work, by preserving it in a healthy condition, and keeping the system in good order. Nothing is more conducive to health than a copious use of the pure element, friction of the skin with coarse towels, and exercise in the open air afterwards. These, with temperate living, regular sleep, early rising, and a contented, easy temper, will prove more effectual than any medical prescription that ever was written. Red spots, and eruptions of every description, likewise proceed from an unhealthy state of the skin. The following ointment has been recommended to remove the worm pimple: take an ounce of barley meal, the finer the better; one ounce of powdered bitter almonds, and a sufficient quantity of honey to make them into a smooth paste.

C. W. L.—Your young friend would probably overcome his stammering in some degree by pursuing the course of practice followed in institutions where this defect is sought to be cured, which course is this, namely: The vowel sounds indicated by the letters e, a, ah, aw, o, and oo, and the diphthongs i, oy, and ou, (as in *cow*,) are pronounced with great deliberation, and the utterance prolonged from a quarter to half a minute. After this has been done twenty or thirty times, such words as eat, eight, *arbor*, *author*, oath, ooze, ice, oyster, owl, and others beginning with the above-named vowel sounds, are pronounced with the utmost possible deliberation and distinctness. Then all the *consonant sounds* are practiced upon in the same careful and thorough manner; after which words of easy enunciation are introduced; then words more difficult to utter; then easy sentences; and finally, by easy and regular graduations, the most difficult words and sentences are reached, practiced upon, and mastered. Such a course of practice will require the exercise of much patience and perseverance, but the end sought is one of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure of much time and labor.

Irenious, Jr., of Brooklyn, says he asked us a question some four or five weeks ago, which we have not yet answered, whereat he has waxed exceedingly indignant and wrathful, and if said question be not *immediately* answered, we shall probably loose a "patron"—said "patron," doubtless, being the "Irenious, Jr." aforsaid. Dreadful as the alternative may be, we shall not answer Irenious Jr.'s question, because we do not know what it was; and if we did know, we would not answer it on compulsion, though answers "were as thick as blackberries." As for Irenious, Jr.'s wrath, however fearful it may seem to him, it excites no alarm on this side of the East River; and even should he cease to "patronize" us, we have little doubt that for the next edition of the Ledger, after that *un-*"patronizing" catastrophe, we should wet down paper enough to smother not only his "wrath," but also Irenious, Jr. himself and all his discontented friends.

Cushman.—If a man who has been arrested on a civil process in Massachusetts, flees into this State, he can be followed hither, arrested on the making out of the proper papers, and taken back again. You can replevin your horses and carriage, if the case is as you represent it, and you can also prosecute the stable-keeper. Before attempting to do anything in such a complicated case, however, you should consult some sound-headed, practical lawyer, and put the matter entirely into his hands, or, the first thing you know, you will lose your cause, and have a round bill of costs to pay into the bargain. A man should never attempt to manage a thing which he knows nothing about—such shallow economy is always very expensive.

F. Furness.—Your trouble arises from the fact that you do not seem to be aware that there is in law a difference between false-swearing and perjury. A man might go before a magistrate, and swear that he was worth a million of dollars, when, in fact, he was worth nothing; or that he was fifty years old, when he was only thirty years of age; and although this would be false-swearing, it would not be perjury. To commit perjury, a man must "bear false witness against his neighbor" in a suit at law; in other words, he must swear falsely, for the purpose of injuring somebody, in a case undergoing judicial investigation.

R. C. P., Jr.—To give the information you ask for, it would be necessary to write a treatise on banking, and quote the laws of every State on that subject—a work for which we have neither time nor space in the Ledger. There are treatises on that subject, which you can obtain at any first-class bookstore in Boston.

Florence May.—Nothing tends so much to keep under the accumulation of scurf on the head as cleanliness, and keeping the skin in proper condition. The scurf, be it understood, is a natural formation, and neither can, nor ought to be prevented, but only kept from accumulating to excess. The free use of the brush is recommended by all who have written on the subject; if the hair has been neglected, and the scurf is found very tenacious, the following means may remove it: beat up the yolks of two eggs with the juice of a lemon, and rub the mixture well into the hair with the finger, using great friction on the skin of the head. Use plenty of warm water to wash off the mixture, dry the hair thoroughly, and then apply the brush vigorously. The best way of curling the hair is by the usual method of papering. The hot irons injure the hair, drying and impoverishing it; and the effects of the *curling fluids*, so confidently advertised, are but temporary, and moreover some of them are very injurious.

J. Harshellman.—This correspendent says the inhabitants of the vicinity in which he lives are rent into factions by the following question, namely: John Smith was acquainted with and often saw a lady named Miss Roe, (a daughter of the well-known Richard Roe, Esq.,) who subsequently married the celebrated John Doe, and thereby became Mrs Doe, since which Smith has seen her not. Hence the question, if said Smith has not seen the lady since her marriage, has he *ever* seen Mrs. Doe? *Miss Roe* he had often seen, but would that indisputable fact warrant him in swearing in a court of justice that he has seen *Mrs. Doe?* We take the affirmative. Miss Roe and Mrs. Doe would be one and the same person. And we will here add that, foolish as this question my seem to intelligent people, there are hundreds of thousands of stupid folks who will take a deep interest in it.

Christie.—No girl under twenty-one has any right to engage herself in marriage unknown to her parents, especially while she is away from home, at school; and as you have wilfully transgressed all the rules of affection and courtesy that apply to the case, you must expect to be treated differently than you would have been had you acted as a daughter always should. If the man to whom you have engaged yourself *knew* that you were concealing the fact from your parents, it is quite probable that he is an unworthy person, for no *truly honorable* man would be guilty of such a transaction. A man who will attempt to sneak clandestinely into a family circle, must be, at heart, a base and corrupt person, who will sooner or later involve all those over whom he has control in much trouble and unhappiness.

Inquirer.—Webster's Unabridged Quarto Dictionary is the best work of the kind ever published. Keep it constantly on your table and *use it thoroughly*—never failing to look out the meaning of *every word* you do not clearly understand, and you will soon acquire a good knowledge of your mother tongue. This, however, will not enable you to *use* the English language with facility, either in speaking or writing, any more than a knowledge of the nature of bricks and mortar will enable a man to build a house. After you know the meaning of every word in the language, you will have to read the works of good authors, and extensively practice writing yourself, before you will be able to write with facility, correctness and elegance.

Clerk.—You should address the President, in writing to him, just as you would any respectable man with whom you are not on terms of intimacy. You should not use any title whatever, but simply commence your letter with "Sir," which is the highest possible form of address. "Sir" means *sieur* or *sire*, which is *lord, father, sovereign, the head*, or *the highest*—and the reason of its being adopted even by noblemen, and men high in office, in addressing persons of inferior rank, may be found in the growth of Democracy, in the English, American, and French Revolutions—the beheading of Charles I. and Louis XVI., and the electoral franchise, which all maintain that every man is by nature's birthright a "sir" or *sovereign*.

A Lady Reader wishes to know, in case she goes to church or any other place with a gentleman, and meets another man with whom she is acquainted, who asks the privilege of escorting her home, if she should allow *both* gentlemen to accompany her home? or if not both, then how should she manage the affair? Such a case is quite a simple one, and easily managed. You have only to say to the second gentleman, when he asks the pleasure of escorting you home, "Thank you, sir; I have company," and he will bow, bid you adieu, and take himself off in as gentlemanly a manner as possible.

Grace.—Such domestic quarrels as you mention are unspeakably contemptible, and disgraceful to both parties. It is a great pity that people's "independence" and "high spirit" are not more often exhibited on the side of truth and dignity, and less often by way of obstinately keeping up a petty quarrel.

John.—In writing to a lady about an affair that is of more interest to you than to her, you should enclose a stamp if you wish a reply. Whether or not she would be justified in not replying in case you omitted to send the stamp, would depend upon the circumstances of the case.

Express, Franklin, N. H.—You should inform the postmaster that his clerk keeps your Ledger over the Sabbath to read, and if he will not correct the iniquity, then write to the Post Master General at Washington.

Mary.—We were recently told by a physician, who has tested the remedy, that the cleaning of the teeth every morning in camphor water—(that is water with a little essence of camphor in it)—will, in many cases, prevent tooth-ache, even where parties have decayed teeth.

L. O.—It makes but little difference where you learn the printing or any other business, only so you learn it well and thoroughly; and whether you do that or not will depend more upon yourself than upon your employer.

Hettie.—Mention incidentally to the gentleman you are engaged to that your friend wishes your daguerreotype, and if your lover does not object, or show any signs of objection, grant the request—if you wish to do so.

Robert Pemberton.—The story of "Karmel the Scout" is founded on fact, and none of the incidents detailed therein are exaggerated. It is a faithful representation of the time and circumstances in which its scenes are laid.

D. W. P.—You must look in the advertisements of daily papers for such information as you wish. It is no part of our design to advertise other people's business in this department of the Ledger.

Hattie.—If you could *prove* your parentage, you could lawfully claim the property, no matter what changes of name you may have undergone since your birth.

R. F. R.—General Scott is the only commander who has had the rank of Lieutenant General conferred on him by the United States Government.

H. L. H. You can probably ascertain where the book can be found by inquiring at any first-class bookstore, unless the work is out of print, which we think is the fact.

Boston.—You lovers are a queer people—hopeful and despairing, jealous and credulous, blind and far-seeing, and so on through all catalogues of contradiction.

Franklin.—There is no law for the regulation of the charges of express companies, except such rules and tariffs as they themselves adopt.

R. H. Tomkins.—We can furnish you with back numbers of the Ledger containing "The Refugees." They will cost forty-four cents.

South.—If you "*must* go to sea," why don't you go, and say no more about it? You would probably soon get sick of it, and wish yourself safe home again.

A. McIntosh, East Baton Rouge.—Yes; send us the $6, with the names of the four subscribers, and it will be all right.

Harrison P., Lyons, N. Y.—Yes; send us $3, and the names of yourself and friend, and we will send you each the Ledger for one year.

W. C.—Florida, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, are States in which a divorce can be obtained for many things beside infidelity.

L. M. B.—We cannot speak positively on such a subject, but it is not at all probable that Sir John Franklin will ever be discovered.

Lawyer.—Advertise for the missing man in the London Times, and in a Sidney and a Melbourne paper.

Albert.—Yes; a boy nineteen years old can be indentured to a trade.

Rolgot.—We do not know any cure for deafness. You should state your case to a physician.

Elvina.—Yes; you can sue the man for your son's wages, but you might get beaten at the trial of the cause.

Inquisitive.—There are thirteen daily papers printed in New York.

J. B.—You had better not marry while you are so young. Wait until you are twenty-five.

Saco.—No; Benjamin Franklin was an enlightened Christian and no infidel.

E. C. J.—It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to cure your friend of absent-mindedness.

A Constant Reader.—Millard Fillmore was the son of a farmer; he never learned a trade.

James.—The President's house is furnished by the Government.

Montague.—If a man intends following the sea for a livelihood, the sooner he begins the better.

C. C. Davis.—Maine is called the Pine State; New Hampshire the Granite State.

F. C. H.—We can only furnish the Ledger as far back as June 7th, 1856.

Joseph T. Austin.—We cannot furnish a programme for a May-day festival.

Westminster.—Fanny Fern does not write a line for any paper but the Ledger.

A. G. L.—We cannot find your poem.

Paul Tiverton.—Marry the girl—if you can.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*